

ROUMANIA  
YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

**BY THE SAME AUTHOR**

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS

A WAYFARER'S WALLET

A BOOK OF DAYS



Roumania at bay.

# ROUMANIA

## YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

BY MRS. WILL. GORDON, F.R.G.S.  
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND TWO  
CHAPTERS BY H.M. THE QUEEN OF  
ROUMANIA, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

“ Over thy creation of beauty there is a mist of tears.”

**TAGORE**

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TO  
HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARIE  
WHOSE SELF-SACRIFICE AND UNFLINCHING COURAGE  
HAVE BEEN AN INSPIRATION.  
TO ROUMANIA'S HEROIC ARMY  
HER PATIENT INDOMITABLE PEOPLE  
WHOSE VALOUR AND FORTITUDE  
UNDER UNSPEAKABLE TRAGEDY AND SUFFERING  
HAVE EARNED THEM UNDYING RESPECT  
AND ADMIRATION  
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

## ROUMANIAN PROVERBS

“ Do not dip your spoon into the pot that does not boil for you.”

“ One crow never pecks out another’s eyes.”

“ Work is a golden bracelet.”

“ Better an egg to-day than an ox to-morrow.”

“ Money is round and rolls easily.”

“ Blessed are the hands that knead the bread.”

“ Protect me, Lord, from my friends ; as for my enemies, I shall take care of them myself.”

“ Where the head does not work the legs suffer.”

“ Life is a dream of youth, realized as age ripens.”

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

**E**UROPE is in convulsion. Like as it were a great melting-pot, all are being tested in the stern crucible of fire, and history is being forged from hour to hour. But amid the carnage and horror of battle the souls of the mutilated little nations shine out, haggard and crucified, but with a spirit inextinguishable and superbly serene in honour and faith unquenchable.

Of the terrible fate meted out to Belgium, Serbia, Roumania, and Montenegro, Roumania seems to me the supreme tragedy, for she was brought into the conflict by treachery and the same Power has remorselessly abandoned her to her fate.

This book has been written in the hope of bringing a sympathetic interest, a closer understanding of our heroic Ally to the great English-speaking race, who though fighting with the vast width of Europe between them are suffering and dying for the same ideals. Many of the illustrations are from photographs graciously sent by Her Majesty Queen Marie, who has also contributed two chapters and the touching and wonderfully pathetic introduction. It stands in the forefront of the book, chronologically incorrect perhaps, but it is where it should be. It is a poignant and inspiring human document that will not fail to awaken the tenderest compassion in all those who read of the sufferings of our desolated Ally, forced by a bitter fate to a hated peace, but whose national soul and faith are unvanquished.

The royalties on its sale will be devoted to Roumanian Relief Funds.

WINIFRED GORDON.

*March, 1918.*



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## INTRODUCTION

BY HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA

**I**N these days of adversity when my country is passing through the greatest crisis of its history, it is an immense satisfaction to me to encourage any effort tendered for its aid ; it is therefore a real pleasure to me to write a few words for Mrs. Will. Gordon's book.

Distances are so great and communication so difficult, that very few details of our troubles and trials reach other countries. We are completely isolated from all our Allies, except Russia, and have had to stand unheard of hardships because relief could only be offered from one side, and that side needed all its resources for itself.

The winter that lies behind us is as one of the most fearful nightmares man ever dreamed. There is no suffering that my people have not been called upon to endure, no fear, no sorrow, no pain—every misery, both moral and physical, had to be borne at once.

And I, their Queen, suffered with them, struggled with them, wept with them, shared and understood their every grief.

I too had to leave a home I loved, I too had to flee before the invading foe, had to forsake the new-made grave of the little one who was torn from me whilst the enemy was flooding my land on every side,

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All have I known of mortal anguish, of days when hope

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became less and less, till the last shred had to be surrendered—my child and my country both at once.

The remembrance I keep of those days is of a suffering so great that it almost blinded me ; I was as one wandering in fearful darkness wondering how much anguish one single heart can bear ; black waves seemed to be rushing in upon me threatening to drown me, yet I was quite calm and continued living and working as though my heart had not been tom from my breast.

Strong ties of sympathy had always bound me to my people, but since the extraordinary misfortunes we have undergone together, our mutual affection has turned into deep and comprehensive love.

The grief that God sent me whilst so many were mourning rendered me strangely dear to their hearts ; *I* had suddenly come quite close to them—they felt in me a comprehension of their own woes that had not been mine before.

An immense tide of sympathy flowed from their souls to mine, giving me strength to bear bravely every sacrifice, and not to give way to selfish despair. Tragedy had come upon us, recrimination would but weaken us, complaint lessen our courage—nothing was left to us but dumbly to bear our Fate.

Winter came and with it retreat; hunger came and sickness and death in every form.

One town after another had to be surrendered, ever smaller became our country, a cruel exodus encumbered the remaining provinces; our riches, our pride, our hopes had been tom from us, and like a troop of emigrants

we had to try and find place for our weary bodies and for our sorrowful hearts.

Each thing we thought we could count upon crumbled before the inflow of an enemy ten times too strong for us, who knew all about war whilst we were ignorant and had everything to learn. Nowhere were we safe ; all the help that had been promised us was not forthcoming, we had nowhere to turn to in our agony, and the deadliest of winters was closing in upon us before we knew if we could remain there where we had pitched our tents I

Amidst this constant fear of further invasion we had to gather our courage and our wits so as to improvise hospitals, house refugees, feed and clothe our retreating troops, all this with the feeling that next day perhaps our efforts would be in vain, that the work so painfully accomplished would fall into the enemy's hand I

All our stores, our hoarded treasures, our food, corn and oil had been torn from us by the rapid advance of the foe ; all that remained to us of our once blooming country were but a few provinces, the poorest, those upon which in the days of abundance we had counted least.

That was but the material side of our distress, and to that must be added every anguish, every grief of departure and separation, the leaving of loved homes, the haunting pictures of devastation, fire and ruin, of abandoned graves and of dying heroes who could not be saved.

With a fresh wound in my own heart I stood amidst the turmoil. I myself empty-handed—I myself a refugee ! What had been mine lay behind the line of fire—also the lonely little grave lay there, belonged now to the enemy, and with it all the torturing remembrance of my child's

xxii ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY illness and death. He was my youngest, my baby, and just the most helpless had I to forsake !

But there was no time to cry over a personal grief, in the hour of disaster so much depends upon the leaders not losing their heads.

To piece together that which is broken is no easy task ; if your house falls down around you, at first your only wish is to sit on its ruins and weep. It is then that those whose love and courage are greatest must come forward and help. Those too grievously smitten cannot immediately lift up their heads, and very gentle must be the hand that endeavours to lead them back from darkness to light.

For a while I thought that the effort would be beyond my strength, such was the hopeless discouragement that had taken possession of every heart. No good news came to gladden our spirits, only tidings of defeat, disaster and distress, and winter lay over everything like a pall of despair.

Then little by little hands were stretched out to help. French and English doctors offered their assistance and with them many nurses and sisters whose devotion has no name.

Little by little we began building up what had fallen ; at first only those whom adversity cannot crush showed the way, then others joined in—till imperceptibly a great new effort was born, and with that effort, new courage and new hope.

It were too long to relate all the weary work of this past winter, a whole volume of want and suffering, of devotion and charity would not suffice. So many single

incidents rise before me, so many faces, so many efforts, and alas ! so many death-beds that I hesitate which to describe.

This is but a preface, yet there is so much to say ! It is a preface to a book about my country which the author has seen in days of prosperity, days that with God's help we hope to see again ; but if to-day I speak of tears and sufferings, it is because, alas, they are uppermost in our minds.

There is too much to tell, too many pictures haunt me, pictures of what was, what is, and of what we hope one day will be.

I look back and see visions of my country as for twenty-three years I have known it, peaceful, blooming, full of abundance, its vast plain an ocean of waving corn amongst which diligent peasants move to and fro gathering in the harvest, the land's dearest pride. I see its humble villages hidden amongst fruit trees, I see the autumn splendour of its forests, I see the grand solitude of its mountain summits, I see its noble convents, corners of hidden beauty, treasures of ancient art, I hear the sound of the shepherd's horn, the sweet complaint of his ditties. I see long roads with clouds of dust rising from them, many carts in a file, I see gaily clad peasants flocking to market. I see naked plains and long stretches of sand by the sea.

I also see our broad proud Danube rolling its many waters past quaint little villages and boroughs inhabited by motley crowds of different nationalities, past towns of which the rising industries are a promise of future wealth. I see our port of Constanza with its bustle, its noise and its hopes.

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Then on the 27th August, 1916, the call to arms— War!

I see the ardent faces of my young soldiers going off gaily to battle—I see the trains leaving, the flowers that decorate the cannons, horses and men—I hear the tramping of passing regiments, shouts of enthusiasm, words of exultation.

I see the first wounded in the hospitals of Bucharest, white beds, many faces all turned towards me, eager hands helping ; I inspect everything, go everywhere. I have my own hospital in our palace, I too am full of hope.

For a while, a very short while, the news received from our armies is good, awakes wild enthusiasm, awakes dreams of glory in many a breast. Then the first ill tidings, a shadow on the expectant faces—a shadow over the town in spite of the blue sky above !

After that there are still days of hope and confidence, days when the first illusions seem to take form once more, but through it all I have the strange presentiment, that my country will have to drink to the dregs the bitterest of cups.

Airships and Zeppelins become a haunting dread by night and by day ; our country being narrow, the ground is good for such cruel sport. Death is poured down from the skies into the streets, women and children are slaughtered without number, and as though in defiance of the laws of God, the days they choose for their deathraids are the days when heaven is bluest and the sun shines most brightly.

Having been designed by the enemy as principal culprit, it is the house out of town where I live with my children that they single out for special punishment, and on a glorious autumn morning they throw seventy-two bombs upon dwelling and garden where it is known that my little ones are usually to be found. But on that day, God did not wish another crime to be added to their lists !

Ever darker are the clouds gathering around our heads, with anxiety we look for the help that was promised us ; Sarraïl's advance in the south ? The Russians' offensive in Galicia-? Russian reinforcements in the Dobrugea ? But we wait in vain ; no good tidings from any side, and the Germans have not yet strait enough !

Surely this proud little country who had defied her, must learn its lesson and be laid low in the dust. And as in the time of the great flood, our small struggling country is threatened from all sides at once. Our frontiers are endless, without reinforcements our own resources are too small, we begin to realize the inevitable results if help does not come soon enough.

But my cup is not yet full—amidst all the turmoil and growing anxiety, my youngest child sickens and all our efforts cannot save his life. During three mortal weeks we struggle to keep him, but Death rules supreme over the world. It is not to be. On All Souls' Day, my last born, my little Mircea, passes away—and the voice of the cannon sounds closer every day.

After that, for a while all becomes dark. I grope about as one who has lost her way. Only one thing remains to me, the intense desire to alleviate suffering around me, to go there where despair is greatest, to drown my own grief in the grief of others, to move in places where my own tears can be shed without shame.

So I begin wandering about in all parts of the country that have remained to us. On all sides I hear the dreaded voice of the cannon calling out its message of death and destruction.

I penetrate as far as they will allow me to go, I hunt up those freshly brought in from battle, as in a ghastly dream, I move from bed to bed.

Every form of suffering do I see ; the last look of nameless dying do I carry away in my heart, and all the while I have the absolute certainty that my country is becoming smaller and smaller—I am in a hurry, I want to go everywhere—everywhere before it is too late. But in a sort of frenzy of grief I know, that all my love, all my devotion cannot hold back the advancing feet of Fate.

Then comes flight ! The cruel hour of parting from our capital, of parting from our home, our hospitals, from the little grave so freshly dug—flight !

For weeks we live in the train, not sure how far we must go to be safe ; but one only thought moves me ; put the living out of danger, then return once more, only once more to the grave of the dead !

But it is not to be—even that consolation is denied me—Bucharest falls, I can no more return to my dead.

Dearly would I like to relate about all those who helped me in my arduous task, but so complex, so many-sided was that task, my efforts had to extend over so large a field, that too many faces rise before me, when I want gratefully to acknowledge those who have worked with me hand in hand.

The English Red Cross sent me aid and material in every form—the wife of our English Minister displayed an indefatigable energy I cannot too highly praise, she is one of those whom adversity cannot crush.



At first we had dreamed of running a big English hospital at Bucharest, founded upon the Miners' generous gift—the hospital was to have borne the name of the dearly beloved child I had just lost. All was decided, the house had been offered us by the officers of the capital—it would have been a beautiful hospital, run under perfect conditions—but like many others, that dream had to be given up. Bucharest fell, and with its fall and the fall of many other important towns our difficulties grew a thousandfold, and all the more intensely grateful am I to those who did not lose courage under such adverse circumstances, but endured every hardship, overcame every difficulty so as not to forsake my soldiers, who more than ever needed succour and aid.

I have had heroic English doctors helping me, with patient brave nurses, overcoming every obstacle, enduring cold and hunger with those they were nursing so as not to forsake their post. It is a long story of devotion and abnegation, which cannot be told in a day.

Towards the end of winter a bad epidemic of typhus broke out, rendering the doctors' task most dangerous. Many of our Roumanian doctors died, faithful to the end—their duties redoubled, for many flee contagion, it is not given to everyone to face such a crisis without giving way.

I lost a great friend—a friend of recent date, but whom I had learnt to admire because of his wonderful work. He was a French doctor who from the very beginning had taken upon himself to run the contagious hospital out of town.

I saw him work with an ardour and courage I shall never forget. He created that hospital under almost impossible conditions, everything was wanting, but nothing could dishearten him, no danger, no difficulty lessen his enthusiasm. He was a continual example to me ; when my own spirits were

low, I would go to see that man work and would give him all my help, so much did I admire his selfless devotion; but he had to die before the trees were green—had to die whilst the snow was melting, when his efforts were beginning to bear fruit ! He had to die of the same illness of which he had cured so many—had to die in the distant land, leaving amongst strangers a quite young wife.

My people know that I am absolutely unafraid of contagion, therefore more than ever was I claimed amongst them during this cruel epidemic. I penetrated into the most infected comers, giving everywhere, trying to carry a little hope and help into the most forsaken holes of misery.

I think that few Queens have had the privilege to get so near their people. I have really gone amongst them, there where very few go. I have both health and goodwill and an inexhaustible desire to console them, to sustain them and to awake hope in their hearts.

Certainly there were days when everything seemed impossible, when the material difficulties were such that the most energetic spirit quailed before the morrow. At those hours it was to me as though I must stand awhile quite still, squaring my shoulders, concentrating all my strength so as to lift a weight almost beyond what a single man can carry. Thus we struggled on from day to day, from horn to hour—"Faith removeth mountains"—I had Faith !

Twice my sister came from Russia.<sup>1</sup> We had not seen each other since the great war's outbreak. The help she brought cannot be told in words ; to have her beside me at those most tragic hours of my life was almost beyond the blessings of this earth.

And she came with full hands, at a moment when my resources had quite run out.

Ah ! Indeed it is in the time of trouble that one learns what is of gold ! In war it is only that which is *real* that can stand ; all that is *sham*, all that which *pretends*, crumbles and falls away. But nothing was spared me, because of the great changes in Russia, even my sister can come to me no more—she was my only neighbour— I have lost her ! And am anxious about what her future is to be.

How often here in Jassy—when going from hospital to hospital, trying to overcome always new difficulties, trying to supply ever new wants, did my thoughts turn to my own hospital in Bucharest, in the large roomy halls of the palace where I had everything I could want —I remember the white beds, the good food, the many helpful hands, eager ladies, books in plenty, music, flowers—a lost paradise indeed !

Here I had no house of my own to turn into a hospital. It was more useful to divide my material and energies, sustaining those already existing. It is a harder way of doing good, less personal, less satisfactory, needs greater <sup>1</sup> The Grand Duchess Cyril.

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abnegation, brings less comfort to one's soul, but in this case I knew it was best.

My ear had to be open for each cry of distress, my hand always ready to succour or to give, all my energies strained so as to encourage the efforts others were making. I had to go everywhere, see everything myself.

I was almost a stranger to the town of Jassy, thus I gained their confidence, by the way I worked with them. I by degrees stole into their hearts.

Those who have never seen them, have no notion of what Roumanian roads can become in winter, of how difficult is all circulation, how communication becomes an effort almost beyond human strength—and this winter was a winter of terrible snow and frost.

Part of our army had to be quartered in small, miserable villages, cut off from everything, buried in snow, transports were almost impossible, untold of hardships had to be borne. All my energy and goodwill could not take me to places where neither motor, sledge, nor carriage could go—I knew that there was want and sickness in those villages, but it was only towards springtime that I could reach them with infinite difficulty, often having to quit my motor and doing the rest of the road on foot.

That was the hardest work of all, that going about in those fever-stricken hamlets, where the patient troops were herded together in wretched mud-huts alongside of the few remaining peasants.

Food was scarce, hardly any wood for heating, soap was a thing almost not to be found, linen was a luxury of better days—illness in every form broke out amongst the soldiers and many died before we could give sufficient aid I

Ah I Indeed I have seen death and misery very near—I have moved about amongst them, have felt the despair of my helplessness, have tried with insufficient means to do wonders, but alas ! against sickness, cold and hunger goodwill alone did not suffice—not to be numbered were the graves that overfilled the cemeteries ; like a wood, the rough crosses grew up side by side.

And yet how much more ghastly is the fate of those in the invaded part of the country, where no help can penetrate.

Here I can at least get to my people—visit them or send them food, aid, comforts—but there in the dear regions we have lost, what may their sufferings be ? Who succours them ? Who consoles them ? Who helps them to hope ?

The enemy must have taken everything from them, forcing them to work against their own brothers, and probably he scoffs at their misery, trying to make them doubt the love of those who had to leave them to so cruel a fate !

That thought is the hardest of all I And to be so helpless—to have no news, no details, to be entirely cut off!

I feel it is a rambling tale, the tale I have told—it is as though I had written in a trance—maybe I have often repeated myself, yet I have only said half of what I had to say. One day perhaps when this period of suffering will be a little more distant I will more clearly be able to write the history of these days of distress.

What can I still add ? Only this : I thank all those who have helped me and all those who are still ready to help, and I want to declare that in spite of the calamity

xxxii ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY that has come over her, Roumania does not regret having thrown in her lot with those fighting for a holy cause 1 Does it not also mean for her the liberation of her brothers in Transylvania, suffering under foreign sway ?

Roumania is proud of her Allies, confident in their noble sense of justice ; she knows that she will not be forsaken and that when the great hour of Victory strikes, those for whom she bled so sorely will not forget that she also has won her right to live !

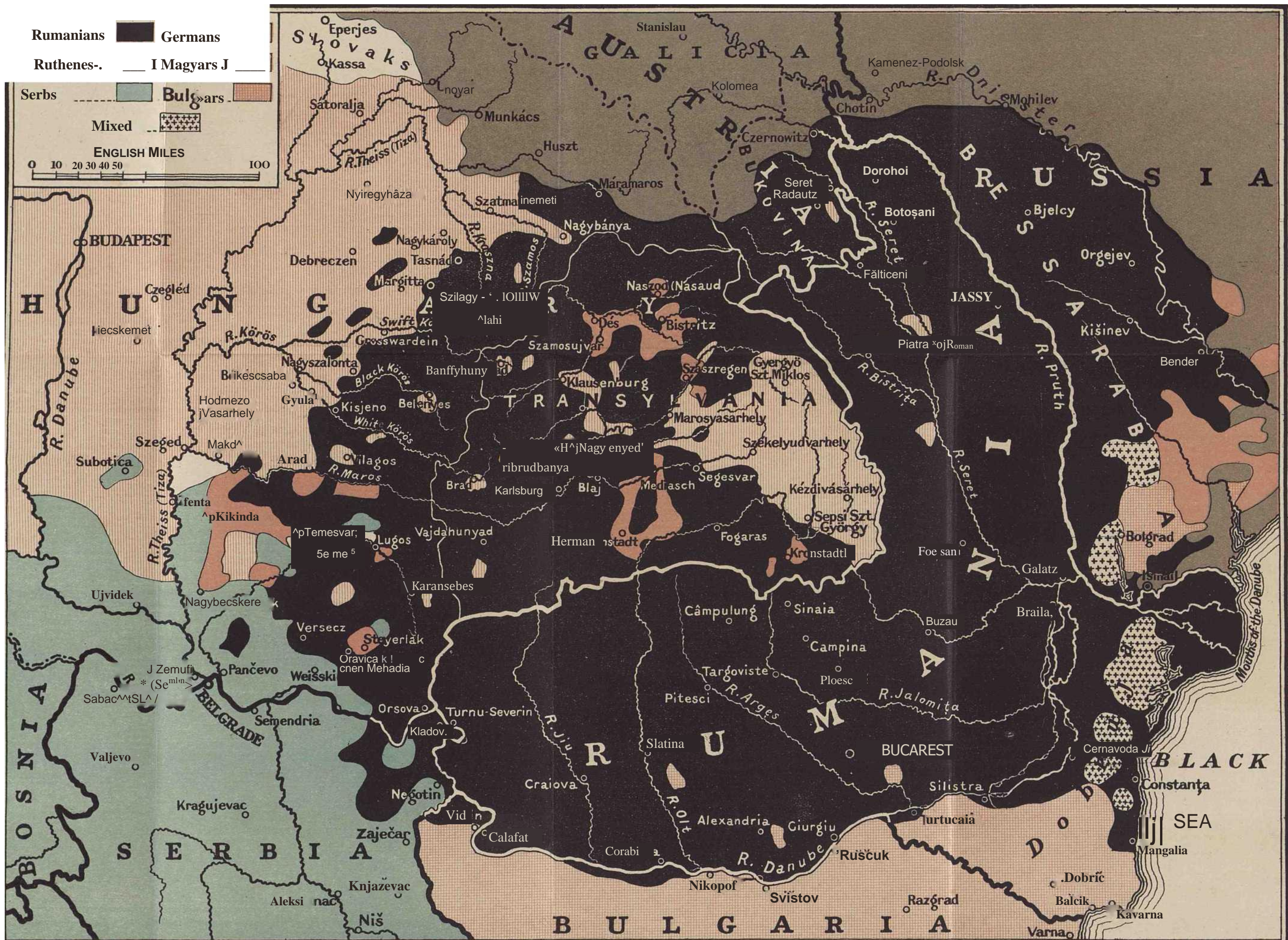
The blessed day of return to our homes, of reunion with those groaning 'neath the enemy's sway may yet be distant; I know not how much blood, how many tears are still to be shed, but this I know : On that day of thanksgiving, on that great day of joy when my people will be singing songs of praise because they are free once more—on that day I, their Queen, will gratefully remember all those who did not forsake me and my country, in my hour of sorrow and distress !

MARIE

1917



# RUMANIA AND ITS UNREDEEMED TERRITORIES.



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### Rumanian equivalents of Hungarian and German place-names:

Hermannstadt= Sibiu Klausenburg = Cluj I Segesvár = Sighişoara I Belenyes = Beiuş Kronstadt = Braşov  
Karlsburg = Alba Iulia | Grosswardeind Onadea Mare J Szamosujvar=Gherla

*Starrfbrdk GeogtEsta. IFLondon..*

The wider white line outlines Roumania as it was on the declaration of war in 1916. The Further darkened portions Transylvania and Bessarabia represent her lost provinces, and peopled by the Roumanian race.



PART I  
YESTERDAY



# ROUMANIA

## YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

### CHAPTER I

#### A LAND OF BEAUTY

The region, nor bright nor sombre wholly,  
But mingled up ; a gleaming melancholy.  
A dusky empire and its diadems ;  
One faint eternal eventide of gems.

*Keats.*

ROUMANIA! what scenes of beauty the soft  
Latin name conveys !

A land of vast horizons, winding rivers,  
mountains, and valleys rich in the luxuriant  
verdure of oak, beech and fir ; plains carrying on their broad  
bosom grain in overflowing measure—nature's priceless gift to  
man.

Under the splendour of an Eastern sun, such as we in the little  
grey Isle of the West but rarely see, broods a calm, a tranquillity  
that lies like a caress on a land, fair and prosperous now, but  
drenched through centuries in blood and tears.

Was it but yesterday that Roumania was at peace ?

Yesteryear the great peaks of the Carpathians fronting the  
realms of their implacable and savage neighbour Hungary,  
were silhouetted against an azure sky ; the 4 ROUMANIA :  
YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY stillness of the mountains held  
no menace, no warning of the bloody massacre and devastation

to come.

High in the blue dome overhead the eagles wheel and circle. With regal strokes they swoop “on pinions strong,” then swiftly rising, disappear into the dazzling radiance of the sun. Above us, among these rocky spurs which rise so sheerly from the green mantle of pine and beech woods that clothe their feet, are the thrones where the king of birds shares his solitude with the wolf, the bear and the chamois.

Tiny shepherds’ huts—little dug-outs made of earth with roofs of turf—cling to the lesser heights, and big fierce dogs rush out and bay fiercely as we pass. All over the slopes, the black, brown and white sheep are lazily browsing in the warm golden light. The bees are droning drowsily as they gather their harvest of honey, so plentiful in this land of flowers, of “wandering voices in the air and murmurs in the wold.”

Listen a moment !

Through the clear, still air the wind is whispering. Softly it brings the faint notes of a plaintive melody ; an old Roumanian love song perhaps—or is it a dirge ? The music of Roumania, even the gayest, is threaded with melancholy, full of the sadness of a tortured past, the passion and tears of the bitter ages, when even the rapture of youth and love could not conceal a measure of foreboding.

The tender melody with its sweet pleading, the longing of the man for the maid, is surely changing. The thin, clear notes are falling into a minor key. What is it that comes across the warm sun-scented spaces ?

The tragic chords—a lament, the *doina*, so full of restless sombre sorrow—flute strangely through the brilliant sunshine.

O Land of Beauty ! under the gay sparkle and laughter of your children, the slow tears lie very close. Within the indomitable heart of the race that has struggled through the

centuries, deep thoughts are stirring !

The notes come clearer : the shepherd boy, the lonely *pastor* of the tranquil hills, comes into sight, a solitary figure amongst those quiet uplands.

What is the dark shadow behind him, following so close ?

What are those whispers borne on the breeze ?

The spirits of the past are surely astir, the sun is sinking—the air is chill.

Play up, little *pastor* ! something merry, something gay-

Only sixteen ?—why, what a child !

Where will he be in two years' time ? Will the slender fingers playing so deftly on the pipes of Pan among the peaceful hills be playing a fiercer, sterner game ?

But to-morrow broods eternally in to-day and only God and the silent stars know what the future holds.

\* \* \* \*

Leaving the wild beauty and loneliness of the Carpathian ranges, we descend into the lush valleys and plains of Roumania's richest province, Wallachia—the wide granary and great oil fields which have brought her prosperity, and earned for her the title of “ the Belgium of the East.”

It is a country of vivid contrasts and endless interest, and Nature has used the colours on her palette with lavish hand. Spring, so rich in promise, so riotous in a

6 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY foam, a frenzy of blossom, has passed already on the upper hills, and Nature, that great artist, her brush full of the reds, yellows and purples of early autumn, is touching the woods and bracken. But summer, like a contented guest with his hopes fulfilled, still lingers in the valleys, plains and near the streams, whose banks are yet ablaze with wild flowers and waving grasses.

On the outskirts of a little village some gipsies have pitched their camp. Dirty, ragged, unkempt, living like animals, these nomads are still inconceivably picturesque. The naked elf-like children, screeching and clamouring for alms, the wrinkled old crones, the *Mira* or Soothsayer, pipe in mouth, and wearing as a girdle the cord and shell, symbol of necromancy and fortune-telling, crouch over the fire, snoozing, or stirring mysterious messes in steaming pots. The wild upright grace of the young girls, beautiful creatures, scantily clad in gaudy rags, is striking ; with flashing eyes, teeth of pearl and figures as lissome as young palm trees, they sway as they dance, heads thrown back, necks bared and arms akimbo. Long braids of blue-black hair glittering with a magpie collection of old coins, glass and tinsel, stream out behind them in the sultry air.

Squatting on the grass are the youths and men, barefooted, slender, uncannily handsome with twisted curls hanging round their sun-browned sombre faces. Some are thrumming out a lively tune for the girls to dance. The violin, the *cobza*—a strange-shaped lute—and the classical flute of ancient days being the inseparable companion of these ragged *Lautari*, the wandering gipsy troubadours of Roumania.

A despised and outcast race I Yet their life is indis-

solubly linked with the superstitious peasantry of these Eastern lands, who call them in on all occasions. Charms for an ailing child, for their cattle, for a good harvest, for rain ; spells to ward off the evil spirits—so profoundly believed in—and philtres for the sick or love-stricken are eagerly sought from these wild children of nature, so skilled in her secret lore. They are bidden to their feasts, to provide the wild, sweet music for the *hora*, their national dance; to the births, weddings and deaths, when, playing their tragic soul-stirring dirges, they head the procession of wailing women to the graveside. The unmeasured yearning and sadness of their music—the nostalgia of far-off lands—thrills out like an *envoi* to the soul setting out on its mysterious journey.

\* \* \* \*

Harvest is in progress, and the burnished plains of ripened corn stretch to the far horizon in a misty golden glow, such as one sees on distant Canadian prairies—none but the very, very old and sick are left in the picturesque little houses ; all are at work in the fields, from the tiny tot of three or four to the *grand-peres* and *grand'mitres* of nearly seventy; youth and age alike are gathering in the precious grain.

Near the roadside, lie the great grey or dun-coloured oxen, beautiful, patient, strong, with their branching horns and soft human eyes. Beneath the shade of the carts—scarcely different from those of early Roman days—lie the babies, cradled on an old sack or skirt, with only the dogs—so fierce to strangers, so gentle to their masters—to safeguard them. When the little mites grow fractious and use their lusty lungs or beat the air frantically with dimpled fists, the “ friend of

8 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY man ” will creep up and gently nose the disgusted and indignant youngster, as if to reassure him.

Each nation looks upon the dog in a different way, but the dogs of war and the dogs of peace (of a pastoral and agricultural people like the Roumanians) are beyond doubt the *intelligentzia* of their kind. A little further East he was sometimes held in fear, and an old Babylonian prayer runs thus : “ From the dog, the snake, the scorpion, and whatever is baleful, may Merodach preserve us.” Perhaps the dogs who inspired this fear in this ancient maker of prayers, had shown an unwise over-hasty zest, and predilection for the flavour of the ankles of his reverence !

On the other hand, on some of the wonderful bas-reliefs of that period, our four-footed friends have been gratefully immortalized, and their names remain written thereon to this day—“ He who ran and barked.” “ The biter of his foes.” “ The seizer of his enemies.” But here in Roumania “ slayer of the wolf,” “ the friend of sheep,” betoken a less disinterested path in life, and a strict attention to his daily duty, rather than to the pleasurable excitements of a doggy existence. One might perhaps add “ guardian of the babes ” without his losing in canine prestige.

\* \* \* \*

The close of the long day comes; the hard task is finished; the carts creak slowly homewards. A *popă*, or priest in black garments, with straggling beard that scissors have never been allowed to touch, and long hair tucked under a high black hat, blesses the women and children as they kiss his hand in passing.



**MUSIC AND REST AT SUNDOWN.**

*Photo by Btlu,*



FILLING THE WATER JARS.

*Photo by Bellu.*



These *popi* or secular priests are of simple origin and live homely lives among the people they teach. They draw but a small stipend and are bound to marry before taking Holy Orders. The faith of the country is that of the Greek Orthodox, which differs in the following essential points from the Roman Catholic Church:

(1) the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father only;  
(2) the administration of the Eucharist in both kinds to the laity ; and (3) the substitution of icons and pictures for the images of the Holy Virgin and Saints. The higher clergy are generally drawn from the upper classes, and celibacy is required of them. If a *popă* rises to be a Bishop he must divorce his wife before assuming office, and she generally retires into a convent; while the Bishop goes into a monastery for a few months' retreat before his consecration.

The sinking sun is sending long slanting shafts of golden light over the plain, as one after another the carts wind along the dusty road to the village with its tiny dwellings, so small one wonders how they can house so prolific a brood as the good wife mothers in the two rooms in which the chickens and dogs are also welcomed. The houses are like the drawings of our childhood—a little square whitewashed box with rough designs in colour painted on the walls, a door like a mouth, and a window like a stolid unwinking eye on either side. The heavy thatch, like the forelock of a shaggy Skye terrier, branches well over the face of the little abode. They stand in gardens gay with flowers and many fruit trees ; and contrast favourably with those of the Bulgarian, who cares for nothing but the purely utilitarian side of life, and whose homestead is bare and unadorned. There

io ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY are two types of dwellings in the rural districts, the house built of wood in the mountain and hill districts where the thatch is replaced by tiled roofs that shine brightly in the sun, a more comfortable and substantial structure than those of beaten earth which are the homesteads of the poorer peasantry on the Danubian plains. There are also the squat semi-underground mud hovels of the gipsies and fishermen with roofs of wattle or reeds, infinitely picturesque in appearance but often breeding places of disease and vermin.

The houses of the wealthier peasants and those of the nobles are curious and very picturesquely built. Some of the old ones are like primitive strongholds, half castle, half house, called *koule*. They are built in a square form with blind walls immensely thick, that show nothing but a massive door, and narrow barred peep-holes. Inside, a stairway leads to the top, where close to the roof which overhangs, runs a wide gallery or loggia, supported by pillars where the family live in the torrid days of summer. Some of the old houses have bells in the turret that tinkle when the wind blows boisterously, and which are rung with great vigour on joyful occasions.

Within the Roumanian home, though poor and often bare, will be found a bright rug or two, woven on the simple loom called *Rasboiu* by these industrious and wonderful peasant mothers of Roumania. Working from morning till night, in the fields, tending the animals, cooking, spinning, weaving, rearing her numerous progeny, her life is one long round of toil, patiently and cheerfully borne. Wedded very young, often at fifteen or sixteen, and frequently abducted by the man she

marries, her beauty soon fades, but the dignity, the tenderness and gentle humour are enduring.

In the big painted chest she brings to her new home lies her outfit, the bright rugs and her slender dowry ; her bridal gown, the dress of her wifehood and the last dress of all—in which she lies in the red-lined coffin, the busy hands folded quietly, and ready for the long journey. All are woven and embroidered by her deft fingers and dainty fancy ; the fine stitchery, delicate design and sparkling beauty of tiny glittering sequins, the clear, silver transparency of the veil—such as the ancient Roman matrons wore—and the *fota* or petticoat, richly embroidered in gold, silver and many colours.

Outside, the night has fallen. In the courtyard, the lively, squealing pigs, the greedy hens forever hunting the wily grub and crumb, the oxen, ponies and the geese, are slowly going to rest. The romping children—the *puici* (little ones)—have been drawn within, the hungry mouths are filled, the little voices murmur the evening prayer. Tenderly the mother kisses each curly head, murmuring a blessing as she lays them side by side on the long, low, shelf-like bed. The last little one lying close to her warm breast is soothed to slumber.

The room is quiet—her man asleep. Her thoughts fly forth to the twin sons of her heart, the firstborn, Vasile and Mihail, doing their military service in the army far away. Crossing herself she kneels before the icon, the *St. Maria*, the “All Holy Virgin Mother,” illuminated by the tiny lamp that is never extinguished. “ Shield them from temptation, Holy Mother of God, keep them fit and noble sons of Roumania. Guard them from evil

12 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY spirits, and send them in Thy good time a wife, a little land and children.”

The never idle hands take up the distaff—eight little bodies have to be clothed, fed, cherished. Life is a weary round, but the mother’s heart is content. Her man, her sturdy children, the little bit of land. God’s good sun and the simple daily round. Home and peace !

\* \* \* \*

Outside, the eyes of the little house are twinkling brightly now. Lit by the lamp, they gleam athwart the darkening path, seeming to say, " We house and shelter souls of men and angels who keep guard within, without.”

In the west the sun, like a gorgeous orange moth, has royally sunk to rest. Only a dying flicker trembles across the gathering clouds of night. Across the vivid shaft of light, cuts the dark line of the Carpathians—like brooding sentinels they stand—guarding a nation—at peace.

\* \* \* \*

The change in type the moment one crosses the frontier is striking and very interesting. The crafty impetuous Hungarian, the imperturbable slow-moving Serb, the stolid Bulgar, might be perhaps mistaken for brothers if dressed alike, for in physique and some facial traits they resemble one another, but never could one mistake the Latin origin of the Roumanian. Slender, with dark eyes in which a sombre fire mingles with much latent fun and good humour, graceful figures and courteous ways, they are Latin through and through—a Western power in an Eastern setting. Isolated between the Slav and Turkish

ances the original strain has persistently remained through the centuries, and any influence imported by their Turkish or other rulers has been only minor in degree and ephemeral.

Eighty per cent of the population is agricultural, and the peasants love the land with a devotion born of the many generations who under the ban of oppression have watered it with their blood and tears. Hard-working and frugal, whether they are the kilted highlander of the Carpathians, the lone shepherd of the hills or the agriculturist on the great plains, they are one and all imbued with the traditions of the past, and the valorous deeds of their forefathers, immortalized in ballad and folk-lore, are as real to them as the religion which influences them so powerfully.

Deep in his patient heart lies the age-old craving for the little piece of land—the bit of Mother Earth that he may call his own—the tiny pasture, the brown soil that yields the grain his toil-worn hands have sown and reaped so industriously, and on which his tiny homestead stands. This is indeed his heart's desire, his beacon and his hope.

For the present agrarian system, though much improved in the last few years, is still largely a legacy from mediaeval days, the land having hardly yet recovered from the leprosy of the Turkish rule. The great domains belonging to the absentee aristocracy were let out to middlemen, who were peculiarly oppressive and kept a large proportion of the peasantry—the bone and sinew of the nation—in a condition of dependence, on a starvation wage and in such continual toil for their masters that they had hardly time to cultivate their own small

14 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY holding, which frequently fell into the hands of unscrupulous Jews.

Unlike the upper classes the peasantry are religious. Their church—the Greek Orthodox—and its observances are strictly adhered to, the law of the Church and the law of the land having equal weight with the rural population. Fasting especially has a strong hold upon the people. Their food at all times is simple and sparing. Consisting principally of the *mamaliga* or maize porridge, which the lusty little brood of children share with their elders, it is the more astonishing to see the great number of fast days imposed on them by the order of the Church, amounting to at least two hundred days in the year, and this obligation they follow most submissively.

The women and girls especially keep their fasts most rigorously and it seems almost to be accounted a greater sin to break the fast than to break the Ten Commandments. During Lent, onions, bread, and thin vegetable soup and the *mamaliga* are all they will take. Even when very ill it seems the patient would rather “fast and die than eat and sin.”

Their costume is thoroughly characteristic of this beauty-loving race and is worn with an inherent grace. In many respects it closely resembles the dress of the Dacian period, indeed the *opinci* or sandals worn by the men are exactly like those worn by the Dacian captives on Trajan’s column at Rome. The people are a handsome race and look extraordinarily well in their national dress. The men, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, slender and well-proportioned, wear a loose white shirt over tight-fitting trousers of white cotton tucked into handsome stockings embroidered in black and white. Round his

waist—for he only possesses one, the women have discarded theirs—he wears some splendidly coloured scarf swathed round and round him very tightly, accentuating his slender build. The women wear loose white blouses open at the throat, of cotton or soft butter muslin, beautifully embroidered and a glitter with tiny sequins and gold thread. The *fota* or apron has panels back and front of rich dark colours or is made of wonderful gold tissue shot with gold, Their embroidery and colour scheme though Slavonic is far finer, more delicate and sumptuous than the Bulgarian or Serbian, and shows very distinctly the Byzantine influence, and in the transparent beauty of the long veils, the headkerchiefs, and *condu* or lovely glittering tiara, all express the artistic personality of the people.

Notwithstanding Roumania's close proximity to the Orient and the long Turkish domination she had to endure the position of the women here is an extraordinarily free and independent one, and their influence in the family and social life is very marked. As an instance, it is related that in ancient times a Prince of Moldavia, being beaten by the enemy, retired to his fortress. Arriving there he was met by his mother who adjured him to return and continue the fight, and finally told him she would never allow him to enter the citadel except as a victor. So inspired was he by her martial courage and advice that he gathered together his scattered forces, gave battle and won a great victory.

The Roumanians, like the Serbs, are a poetic people with many ideals, and among them the respect and kindness they show to their women is a charming and very attractive trait. It is a contrast to Hungary, where a

## i6 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

woman thinks she has lost the love of her husband unless she is beaten regularly—a proof of matrimonial affection the Roumanian woman would not stand ! Or in Bulgaria, where she is the servant of her man, and the honeymoon over, her freshness gone, life becomes hard and ugly in its purely material aims.

The proverb : “ Blessed are the hands that knead the bread,” show very truly the position and affection she is held in. The relation between her and her husband is based on mutual respect and kindness, she is the keeper of the purse, her advice is always sought and her position and influence in the family is one of trust and love. The peasants are of a proud and independent nature and all prefer to till the soil to being servants in the town.

They are an extraordinarily dignified race of *la beaute calme* that travellers and French writers have noticed so much, and when they advance in years the men especially look exceedingly patriarchal. A wide gulf divides their mentality from those of the town dwellers, and they have a reserve, though a kindly gracious one, a certain unapproachability, a fear that you may want to exploit them, a distrust as to any action being a disinterested one, that is born perhaps of long years of oppression. If you talk to them and assert some fact, or ask their opinion, they will make a deprecating movement with their hands saying, “ O fi boerule !—perhaps, it might be so, sir ! ”

\* \* \* \* \*

Their lives are spent in an unrelenting round of toil; simple, hardy and abstemious, they cling to traditional customs and dress. Their pleasures are few and simple. The winter evenings round a big fire the women and girls assemble spinning, and the old legends and stories



*povești* are recited, and the popular ballads *doine* are sung in turn. The feasts of the Church, weddings, funerals, baptisms, elections, or the visit of a *prefet*, are among their simple pleasures. On Sundays and feast-days in the summer, their workaday clothes will be discarded and their picturesque festal attire donned. Round the village green they gather, and, joining hands in an enormous circle, will dance the graceful *hora* to the strains of the gipsy musicians. Though gay they are never rowdy, and threaded through the natural vivacity of their virile temperament runs a strain of melancholy, bred from the long years of oppression, and the stoic acceptance of a destiny that the Turk forced them to accept for so long.

At Easter or St. George's Day, which is celebrated as the arrival of spring, branches of greenery are hung over their doorways in welcome. This is also the day when the young men choose their brides. The girls dressed in their best sit around the village green. The young men saunter round in groups, laughing and joking with the blushing girls. When they have decided on the one they like, she is taken by the hand and asked to dance. This is tantamount to a declaration : if she dances twice with him it signifies her consent. Sometimes the parents object and forbid the marriage, and then, as the peasants say, " the lover just goes and steals her ! "

Weddings, like the funerals, are equally influenced by many of the classical observances of the ancient Roman as well as the Greek pagan rites. The bread broken over the bride's head, the anointing of the threshold with butter or honey, the *brad* or branch of the fir tree that the best man holds over her, symbolical of vigour, fecundity and health, are only a few of the interesting customs c

i8 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY followed on these occasions, which date from ancient times.

One of the first things a newly wed wife will do is to go to the well and throw in a coin to propitiate the *genii loci* dwelling there, and always a few drops from the pitcher when filled will be sprinkled on the ground as an offering to the *Zâna Apei* or water spirit. To arrive in rain is lucky, and when the villagers want to honour someone greatly, water is sprinkled before their feet ; a wooden pail also filled with water is put outside the door on festive occasions. Roumania being a dry country, and an agricultural one, with a terribly hot summer, rain means everything to these people, who regard it as the symbol of life, bringing them fertility, abundance, and a good harvest. The line from the Koran, <sup>11</sup> "By water everything lives," bequeathed to them from the Turkish occupation, has a very real meaning for them.

The heart of the nation—its peasantry—differs but little today from what it was in the time of its Roman ancestors. The legends, customs, habits, dress of olden time have been preserved here as in no other Latin country. Terpsichore brought them their *Câlusari*, a national dance, undoubtedly a reproduction of the Rape of the Sabines, while the festivals for invoking rain are identical with those held for that purpose in ancient Rome.

Another ancient custom from Greek and Roman times is the employment of professional women mourners, the *Bocitoare*, who wail over the departed as in days long gone. The tile on which the priest will draw the mystic sign of the pentacle or the words " Christ has conquered " is placed over the heart to prevent their return to earth

as a vampire. The stick that is laid in the wrinkled hands of their dead ; the little silver coin—the *navlon* or charm—placed on their brow, is the continuation of the ancient classical custom that was meant to help the pilgrim across the dark, unfathomable waters :

“ Beyond the shores of Styx and Acheron,  
In unexplored realms of night to hide.”

In some parts of the country when a death occurs all the pots and pans are turned upside down to prevent the escaping soul seeking refuge there and haunting the family.<sup>1</sup> Dressed in its best the body lies, its head resting on a pillow filled with earth by the relatives, who each put in a handful, murmuring, “ God rest his soul.” Plates containing cakes and flowers are placed beside the body by friends, who think they are able by this means to send messages to those long dead. The house is not swept for two days after a death, and when it is the broom is burnt. The widow eats no meat and must visit the grave daily for forty days, leaving water by the graveside in case the departed should be suffering from thirst. Another pagan custom called *Rusalii*, the festival of the dead, is held in summer, when tributes and flowers are laid on the graves of the departed. The people are extremely superstitious and many oblations are offered to the elemental deities. At birth, if the baby is a son, the “ Dealer of destinies ” has to be placated by coins, to ensure the little one being endowed with courage and good fortune ; while if it is a girl, fecundity and good health are prayed for. The first-born son in every family has an earring put in his right ear to keep away

<sup>1</sup> This custom is also followed in far distant Korea.

20 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY the evil eye.

Red wool or ribbon in the girls' hair is also a charm for this.

Those men who cannot grow moustaches are also considered to possess this evil influence ; blue or grey eyes and red hair are also shunned for this reason. To meet a priest on great occasions is bad luck. The women and children will kiss his hand in passing, but the men, if they can do it without offence, will turn their backs and walk away ; if they can't, they will make a little cross of two small twigs or bits of straw and lay it on the road.

\* \* \* ■»

Roumanian folk-lore is incontestably one of the richest in the world and is full of a poetic grace, a deep undying love for the nature mother which is a striking characteristic of this people. It shows itself very markedly in the rich and very beautiful collection of popular ballads, fairy tales, legends, proverbs, magic formulas and charms; songs, games, dances, mystery, morality and folly plays, which embody in verse and prose the romantic and mystical characteristics of the race and which have been handed down to them through the centuries. The *doine*, ballads sung all over the land, are as real an expression of the heart and soul of this people to-day as in the past, when they were wrung from natures surcharged with deep emotion and devotion to their violated soil. They came to birth under storm and stress, and no one knows who voiced these words of tragedy, passion or of happiness, who write the haunting melodies so expressive of the love, joy or grief of this people.

Many of their ballads are of pagan mythological origin, such as that of the Sun and Moon. The Sun fell in love with his sister and wished to take her to wife, but Jove

interposing at the altar against the sacrilege lifted her up and cast her into the sea, where she changed into an eel. The Sun following her sunk into the sea in the West, but Jove caught the eel from among the waves and flung her into the clouds, where she changed into the Moon—and the Sun still chases her, exhausting his horses in his fruitless attempt to catch his beloved.

The little verses, the *Collindes* (*Kalendae*), that the children sing from house to house at Christmas and the New Year carrying an icon surrounded by flowers :

“ A long time ago

Brother Trajan arose,” have a distinct Roman influence, while the pipes of Pan which are frequently seen on the Gallo-Roman or Roman sculptures are the same as those on which the shepherd, the *'pastor*, flutes his plaintive melody as he passes endless, lonely vigils with his dogs and sheep among the voiceless slopes of the uplands, or whose music filters thinly through the golden haze of summer, the misty veil of autumn.

The shepherd's life is a simple and solitary one. Rising before the dawn from his bed of bracken in the primitive little hut or *stâna* on the mountain-side, he will eat an onion, a little cold *mamaliga* or maize porridge ; throwing his great rough sheepskin over his shoulders, which leaves little to show above but the bright black eyes and a conical cap of fur—he will call his dogs and lead his sheep from the dew-drenched slopes to the higher pasture—for a long and lonely day. The autumn sees them descending with their flocks into the valleys for the winter. This is the loveliest season of all the year in Roumania, with its gorgeous sunsets, the brilliant colours of the changing

22 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY woods, and the cool breeze following on the parched heat of summer. I think the Roumanian peasant would endorse old William Warlock's dictum of that season did he know it!

"I do love October," said William Warlock. "Don't 'ee love no other month, Mr. Warlock?" said Mrs. Mutton. "Iss, I do love all the months, but when I zed I did love October I did mean it did zeem to I zo zweet and beautiful. It do zeem the picture of the year. We do goo vrom month to month, auver and auver, with zomething good in each; but when October do come in, so be it be a good October, then the picture avore un of every colour, gold and red and green and lovely brown with the apple skies, I do zay, zo many, many times to I, 'I do love October.'"

The life and customs of the Roumanian people date back to immemorial times, and in all these Eastern lands of Europe Roumania seems to stand out pre-eminently as the descendant and guardian of the ancient pastoral dwellers of the Carpathian lands.

The departure of the shepherds in the spring for the mountains, their return before the winter, follows a date that has been adhered to through the centuries. Inaccessible to alien influence in their mountains and valleys they have been the steadfast preservers of the ancient Daco-Roman traditions and blood of the original pastoral ancestors of the Roumanian people.

## CHAPTER II

### A LATIN OASIS

**O**NE emerges rather abruptly and suddenly from the wide tranquillity of the country into the noisy gaiety of the capital Bucharest. The streets, crowded in the

bright sunshine and dancing with colour, seemed to be the rendezvous for multitudinous trysts. All the young men sauntering along looked as if they were waiting for some one, and eyed eagerly every girl that passed ! *Midinettes*, with slim ankles, well-dressed hair, and the sure Latin instinct for coquetry and flirtation, vied with the comely peasant girls in the gaiety of the moment, and jest and laughter was bandied about with typical Southern vivacity and verve.

All over the world one will find proud citizens claiming for their town the ambitious title of a " Paris," but their illusion is generally destroyed when travel makes them acquainted with the illustrious reality. With regard to Bucharest, however, the claim is no unworthy one, and this little capital lying on the very fringe of the Orient, surrounded by the slow melancholy of the Slav nations, is the gayest, brightest, lightest-hearted little sister to the elder Paris.

An old legend relates that the city was founded by a shepherd called Bucur who built a little church on the

24 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY right bank of the river Dimbovitza, which still exists and is venerated as the shrine of the patron saint. Formerly a very primitively built town of ancient *boyar* dwellings, and the huts of the shepherds and poor, it was completely rebuilt after the great fire in 1847, and is now a handsome spacious city. Its geographical position on the great high road since the fourteenth century of the traffic between the East and West was also exceptionally favourable to its development. Its formation, which is far more extended in proportion to its inhabitants than most other towns, is very pleasing, and the many wide avenues of trees, fine gardens surrounding the beautiful houses, and wide open spaces planted with shrubs make it a veritable garden city.

Fine boulevards—the Calea Victoria, Carol, Calea Elizabeth, Strada Lipsicani—laid out in French style, broad and well paved, run the whole length of the town to the Chaussée Kissilef, a big open space bordered with woods which leads out of the city. Magnificent villas or palaces, the abode of the wealthy princes and merchants, stand in gardens of bright green shrubbery.

Enormous sums of money have been spent in building and beautifying these abodes, which are furnished with every luxury. The richer owners favour the English style for the furnishing of the big square hall, diningroom and library, the Jacobean and William and Mary period being *le dernier cri*. The *salon* is nearly always French, Louis-Quinze, in style. These mansions are separated from the road by magnificent black iron railings and imposing gates lavishly decorated with gold, giving a very decorative note to the town.

The public buildings are equally imposing, indeed the



post office with its stately entrance and wide echoing marble halls is Olympian in its grandeur. One can hardly imagine the humble washing or grocery bill passing through these stately portals ! Only the missives of the gods or emperors, and postcards—those brilliant winged messages from Cupid, Mars, and Venus—seem worthy of a passage here !

The Royal Palace, on the other hand, is most modest. Composed of three wings, the one to the left is the oldest part, being the ancient town abode of Prince Ghika and later Prince Couza. It is a comfortable, long, low building. A narrow courtyard, less than a quarter the width of that in front of Buckingham Palace, separates it from the road, and one can almost see into the Royal apartments. In the interior, a superb marble staircase leads to the throne-room, and the state apartments as well as the private apartments are furnished with great taste, containing many *objets d'art*, while some of the rooms are embellished with beautiful carving.

Here, as well as at the Palace of Cotroceni and the beautiful castle at Sinaia in the Carpathians, there are many treasures of pictorial and decorative art and a very considerable and interesting library. Here, also, the student of the Spanish school of painting will find an interesting collection : nine of the canvases of that remarkable artist El Greco, including the splendid portrait of Don Diego Covarubias ; three of Velazquez, one a striking portrait of Cardinal Galli, and some of Zur- barran ; a flagellation of Alonzo Cano and some examples of Murillo, Ribeiro, Tristan, Alonzo Coello, Antonio del Rinton and others.

Some examples of the Italian school also adorn the walls: Tiepolo, Correggio, Tintoretto, Paulo Veronese, and Palma Vecchio. A very rare canvas of Squarcione, head of the earlier Paduan school, a Botticelli, a Mantegna, a fine Rembrandt which appeared at the great Rembrandt exhibition at

## 26 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

Amsterdam, and a Rubens, are only some of the great masters which this collection of interest and importance comprises. The nation is also rich in some private collections, rarely found in these Eastern countries.

The Palace of Cotroceni, situated to the west of Bucharest, was originally an old monastery, and is the favourite town residence of the King and Queen. Here were spent the early years of their married life, here the beautiful Royal children were born, and grew up, lovely and happy, romping among the woods and gardens, the big corridors and the more extensive rooms that the older palace in town did not possess.

Entirely rebuilt some years ago, it stands in beautiful wooded grounds. In the park is found the mausoleum of the little Princess Marie, the only child of King Carol and Queen Elizabeth, and among the woods and gardens, ending their days in quiet sylvan retreat, stand the curious old stone crosses which Queen Marie has collected. Many of them are carved and of the Byzantine period and are most ancient and interesting.

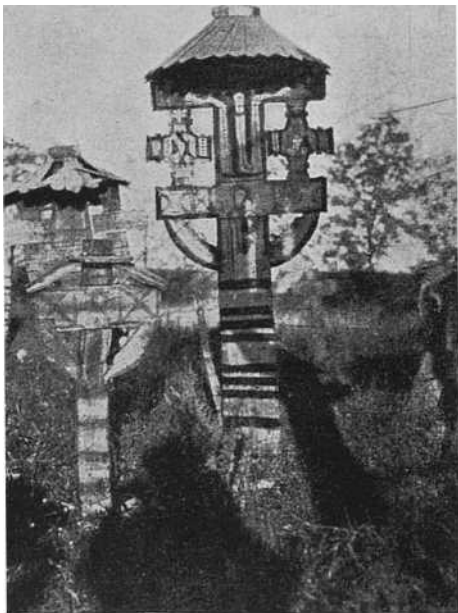
These extraordinary old crosses possess a great interest for the Queen, and she has created out of her original and inventive mind a very interesting one. It seems to be of purely Aryan origin, appearing for the first time in Vedic form as two bars crossed by their centre, the points turning sharply backwards to represent the solar rays.



**GOLDEN' HOURS SPENT IN BEAUTIFUL OLD' CONVENT CLOISTERS**



**VERY OLD AND MAGNIFICENT CARVED STONE  
CROSS.**



**CURIOUS WAYSIDE CROSSES OF PAINTED  
WOOD.**



According to M. Burnouff it is the *Swastika* or primitive cross of the Zoroastrians, or worshippers of fire. This is sometimes found in Scandinavian countries under the name of *filot*.

The interior of the palace is distinguished by the artistic arrangement of the apartments, and above all by the great taste and wonderful decorative talents of Queen Marie. Here in these beautiful rooms her inspiration and ability have produced a charming and most original effect, the predominant *motif* being the mysterious intermingling of the rich colouring and design of the wonderful Byzantine period with the old Roumanian style. It forms a fitting background for one of the most beautiful women of her day.

The Fates were indeed generous to this Princess at birth. Gifted in an exceptional degree, and endowed with that most precious possession of all a rare and wonderful personality, she has a magnetic charm and graciousness of manner, a wide and generous-hearted interest that draws the best from everyone and the devotion of all. At her marriage at Sigmaringen at the age of seventeen she was so lovely that she was called the “angel without wings.” When she came to the throne in October, 1916, she declared that “We hope that during our reign Roumania may grow in greatness and happiness ... to consecrate all my efforts to the alleviation of misery and pain is the mission which, as with all other great-hearted women of the past, I will devote myself, unfailingly true to the cause and welfare of the Roumanian people.” And her word has been most nobly kept.

Her life up till now had been an absolutely happy one, surrounded by every luxury, blessed with good health and the most beautiful children—three boys and three girls, to whom she is absolutely devoted—fate seemed to have poured every good and perfect gift into her lap. Artistic and accomplished, beloved and adored by all, her great beauty and charm, her

## 28 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

energetic high-spirited nature seemed to have wonderfully fitted her to be the queen of a country with a great future before it, and of a people so aesthetically responsive to her warm-hearted radiant personality. From the day of her entry into her adopted country she has endeared herself to the people by her generosity and kindness, and has thrown herself heart and soul into their interests and plans for their welfare and advancement.

Beauty and tenderness of heart ! What better gifts can the gods bestow on one ?

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The nation that has not the *Soleil des marts*, as Balzac has called it, that does not possess in some measure the glory of past traditions of poetry or art, is a nation without a soul. It is not material success, the wealth, commerce that counts in the higher civilization, it is the imperishable little flame of genius in sculpture, painting, music or verse, which it hands on to its descendants that is the true criterion of the inner spirit of a race.

In folk-song, proverbs and legends Roumania is very rich, but in the higher arts, the incessant barbarian invasions, the vicissitudes the country experienced stood in the way of development; the ruthless conquerors plundering or destroying all they could lay their hands upon, though fortunately some very interesting Roman records and remains escaped extinction and still exist.

One of the earliest sources of art in ancient days emanated from the great religious houses and churches. In mediaeval Roumania the plastic arts never broke away from the circle of religious formula ; their manifestations were invariably ecclesiastical in form and idea, and in the countries which professed the Greek Orthodox faith the Byzantine influence was naturally predominant. The beautiful, the pleasing and especially the nude were rigidly eschewed as a snare of the Evil



One, and everything was sacrificed in order to attain a concentration of devotional piety in the arrangement and expression of the figure. The frescoes in the Roumanian churches and monasteries show this influence very characteristically, and it is only in architecture that there is an occasional departure from the hieratic and dogmatic style of Byzantine art.

A conventional monotony in the figures and poses, a lack of plasticity, an accentuated symbolism, a piety and ecstasy, an attenuation of all material beauty are the rules of Byzantine art as laid down by the monk Denys in his celebrated guide, and accurately interpreted by his disciple the painter Manuel Panselinos.

This manual found at Mount Athos in 1839 was the catechism and artistic guide that governed the artists of the Church throughout these Eastern lands. It was an art essentially dominated by the Church, and which allowed little liberty of execution or caprice to the artists. Nevertheless what it loses in inspiration it gains in richness and symbolism, and as an expression of a marvellously decorative and mystically religious craft, it is extraordinarily impressive.

Not only in painting and in mosaics but in the civil as well as the ecclesiastical architecture this symbolical



30 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY intention was apparent, and various well-known authorities have shown that in construction, nearly every part of the sacred edifice had its profound mystic signification.

In the frescoes of some of the churches and monasteries in Roumania all the horrors of the damned are portrayed with terrible morbid minutiae of detail. Many of these paintings belong, however, to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and constitute probably a departure from the true Byzantine art, which emphasizes only the mystery, the immutability, the presence of the Supreme Being, the hierarchy of Heaven, the holy saints, virgins, and ecclesiastics, and the portrait-like presentments of devout emperors and empresses in their archaic but superbly sumptuous attire.

This art lost something of its wonderful richness and its extreme rigidity of convention in its transplanting to other provinces and lands, but this loss may be said to be balanced by a *naïveté*, a simpler charm born of the pious rustic soul of the Roumanian people.

The early literature of Roumania consisted of old chronicles, lives of the saints, legends and translations from the Slavonic and Greek literature.

In 1864, when the great monasteries and convents of Roumania were secularized, their precious relics of gold and silver, chalice, plates, reliquaries, crucifixes and missals were installed in the museum at Bucharest. Here also were placed the elaborate sacerdotal vestments of sumptuous design and colour, splendid in fairy stitchery of gold, pearls and precious stones exhibiting the perfect craftsmanship so characteristic of the magnificent period of Byzantine culture. The unique treasure of Petroassa called by the Roumanians the “ Hen and Chickens,”

consisting of a great platter and twelve magnificent pieces of gold plate, richly embossed and encrusted with jewels, is also in the museum of the Roumanian capital. It was found by a peasant in Buzeu in 1837 while ploughing his field, and is attributed to the period of Athanaric, King of the Visigoths. Twenty-two pieces were found, but many of them were broken, and only twelve perfect specimens are now shown. Some splendid gold crowns and barbaric jewellery were found at the same time, and these have been pronounced unique specimens of the art of the Goths.

The Byzantine was not the only art that influenced mediaeval Roumanian life and culture. The Venetians who came to the country in the seventeenth century to paint the portraits of the *boyars* influenced the Roumanian artists in form and colour, as well as in the design and modelling of jewellery and plate, icons, tapestry and the dress of the period.

Perhaps the most distinctly national type of Roumanian architectural art is to be seen in the old fortress houses or *koule* which I have described elsewhere. They are very original in structure and as far as I know are not often found in any other European country.

The many monasteries and convents are built on beautiful hill sites or beside streams ; the earlier ones are of the Byzantine type and are often surrounded by deep walls behind which the people from the plains and villages retired when the enemy were overrunning the land. They have huge gates called *Clopotnitzd* and a *Arhondaric* or guest-house where travellers are lodged, and their peculiarly shaped cupolas of burnished copper or gilt metal shine for miles around.



## 32 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

All over the country one finds numbers of beautiful old stone crosses and tombstones, enriched with carving and inscriptions of great interest. They were placed near every well, to bless and protect the precious fluid, in the meadows, among the leafy woods, by the roadside—sometimes alone, arrestingly beautiful, standing deep in the wild flowers and waving grasses—or else in groups made of wood with crudely painted figures of saints adorning them. Some are high and very old with the names of those who erected this simple testimony of their faith carved on them—others have little roofs to keep the snow and rain from weathering their gnarled time-worn heads. Almost all are quaint, many are very beautiful.

Roumanian intellectual culture is of very recent development, retarded as it has been by centuries of strife. Nevertheless during the short space of seventy odd years—which represents the period of modern Roumania's existence—in the upper classes the national temperament with its enthusiastic and mental endowment has developed at a much greater rate than that of any of the other Balkan Powers, and has produced artists, writers, and scientific men of acknowledged ability. But it must be noted that her art is not so much a complete national growth as a reflection of Occidental influences. Since the Phanariot days the French influence has been paramount, and in recent times the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* at Paris has been the nursery for the national artistic development. The late Queen Elizabeth, better known as Carmen Sylva, greatly fostered the intellectual inspiration of the nation, and Queen Marie, who has also much artistic and poetic perception, has worthily followed her example, and at her palace has welcomed the various poets, artists, writers and musicians, affording them every encouragement and opportunity to develop their gifts.

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Life in Bucharest for those who have the leisure and the wherewithal is an exciting and amusing pastime. There are endless distractions for the gay and pleasure loving—music, beauty, *joie de vivre*, and money to burn I What potent lures for the light-hearted youth of a nation I

And the city, how it hums ! Like a brilliant top spinning merrily. The day is not long enough to crowd in the many interests and delights, and there is hardly time to sleep !

Much entertaining is done in their beautiful houses but far more at the cafes, Enescu and Capsa being the prime favourites and always crowded. The prices, like the shops, vie with those of Monte Carlo. The *chef* is a master artist summoning the wares of Autolycus from the distant marts of France, while the owners one might surely suppose could give points to the “rake-the-dollar-in-quick” specialist of New York or Chicago.

Bucharest, though a city of opulence and gaiety, so close to the East, shows no sign of the “Kef” of the Turk, that indolent lethargic outlook of the Oriental which has always been such a barrier to their progress, nor yet of the fatalist “Nichevo” (it doesn’t matter) of the Slav!

No, everyone seems alert, ready for anything ; business, yes, but always and decidedly pleasure ! But Roumania

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is full of contrasts, and when one finds a really busy hard-working man he is abnormally so, though never coming quite up to the standard of extreme concentration shown by the American and some Englishmen of affairs, who often, in the frenzied pursuit of wealth, have forgotten what pleasure is, how to play, and that the music of our lives depends upon the rests as much as on the notes. Like the American, however, they take the same eager interest in strangers, their news and opinions,

### 34 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

and show a lively curiosity as to what is thought of their country and customs.

Though Slavs and Turks have invaded the country in the past, the former has left the greater influence on the national character, and this is but slight; the presence of a considerable number of Slav words in their vocabulary being perhaps the most outstanding effect of that influence.

The Latin strain is even more marked and obvious among the Roumanians in the remoter villages of Transylvania, and their language is an indisputable proof of their origin.

The whole of their political and social bias is towards the Latin rather than the Slav nations. The language of France, that dear but distant sister, is spoken by the upper classes ; Russian, that of their nearest neighbour, rarely. All who can afford it have English nurses and governesses for their children, and the babies often babble English before they can speak a word of Roumanian.

Whether for good or evil, French influence and teaching have moulded the life of the upper classes considerably. Apart from the strong ties of sympathy between the nations, it undoubtedly owes some of its early origin to the Phanariot Princes, whose families living amidst the squalid and barbarous atmosphere of Stamboul endeavoured to seek enlightenment and culture from Paris and in a study of the French literature and language. This slender coating of civilization followed them when they became Princes of the Principalities.

Roumania, unlike the neighbouring states of Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria, is the only one which has preserved an aristocracy. The *boyars* or nobles were the great feudal landlords of the past, and though their property and rights have been greatly curtailed they still survive, a fairly powerful class. They have their faults as well as their virtues. Some of them are



disfigured by devoting themselves to a ceaseless pursuit of pleasure, an existence given up to luxury, living out of their country and spending their fortunes in a luxurious life at Monte Carlo and Paris. Others happily with a higher sense of national duty have taken up the interests of their estates and tenants, and aided by their natural gifts as a Latin race, have proved themselves patriots of marked political ability, as well as diplomats of acknowledged ability and acumen.

They are inveterate talkers ; warm-hearted, inquisitive and loquacious. At their parties they pass long hours at a time—and well into the morning—listening to the *Lautari* or gipsy musicians occasionally, but principally talking, laughing, eating and drinking light wines, cakes or sweet champagne. Climate may undoubtedly have something to do with this pronounced zest for midnight conversational activity, but I do not think any house in England except perhaps the House of Commons could



36 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY support such an orgy of talk, and talk, and yet more talk as this gay light-hearted people maintain without a sense of exhaustion.

The music is not listened to seriously, and interruptions are constant, the melodies being frequently and suddenly changed to another at some one's wish.

In appearance the men of the upper class are very like the Italians, dark, slender and well-proportioned. The dark type predominates over the blonde. Of medium height, they have wide foreheads, clear-cut features, small ears, hands and feet, and quick intelligent eyes. With an unusually keenly developed olfactory sense they have also a quick ear for musical intonation, although not remarkable for any special musical endowment.

The men of the upper class have charming manners, lively and courteous, but their gaiety is often only skin deep and conceals a strain of morbid melancholy. Generous to prodigality, ambitious and eager; capricious often and sometimes cruel, they are yet rarely revengeful and are a curious mixture of dreaming and action, weakness and vigour that shows the various influences that have affected their race.

The standard of intellectual culture will be a revelation to those who know little of Roumania and imagine her as a lower civilization than our own. The education and mental equipment of the young man or girl of the leisured classes is higher than our own, and they are in general far wider read, expressing themselves easily, gracefully and fluently in at least three languages. They are interesting and delightful companions with a wit and quickness of thought that tosses the ball of repartee



lightly from one to another. In politics they are versatile and impassioned speakers, and are keen travellers, often journeying far afield.

Gay, witty, amusing, who can deny that the Latins above all races know how to squeeze the juice out of the fruit of life, and with their brilliant *tournure d'esprit* and subtle intellect they are one of the most delightful people to mix among.

Perhaps in our staid, more serious way we might consider them frivolous, perhaps they promise more than they perform and certainly conjugal fidelity is not one of their conspicuous qualities. They do not follow Richardson's advice that in choosing a wife one must be careful not to choose any one else's!

Ardent, impulsive, susceptible and adventurous in love, their jealousy is soon roused and they quarrel quickly ; but another pleasing face will soon oust the erstwhile adored one, and in love, as some one has said, the Roumanian *galant* finds the word " always " generally but means goodwill towards the future and confidence in himself.

It has been said that a woman, to be beautiful, should be English as to her head, French to her waist and Arab for her limbs and feet. Though not conforming to this standard, yet the women both of the peasantry and upper classes have as a rule more than the usual share of good looks. Like the men they are dark, of medium height, with a grace and vivacity of speech that contrast strikingly with the soft, semi-Oriental expression of their eyes and indolent charm of movement. Proud of their Latin blood, of French influence, and friendships made in school days spent in Paris, they are intensely Western in



38 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY ideas and mode of life and are as removed and different from their neighbours in Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria as if the whole width of Europe divided them.

Brought up in the same strict conventions as the French girl, the Roumanian girl, as soon as she marries, takes every advantage of her new-found freedom, discards restraints and dips into a whirl of flirtation and social distraction of every sort. If it is true that men retire into marriage, women emerge from it, then the young Roumanian *mondaine*, gay, high-spirited and amusing, with much elegance in dress, zest in life, a temperament and a wide quest for emotional experience, tries her wings pretty freely, and in general leads a lively existence.

Of late years the rigorous supervision and strictness with which the debutante was guarded has been somewhat relaxed, and has given way to a more wholesome and liberal standard, and a goodly number of the younger generation are copying the freer life of the English girl. It is a considerable gain, both physically and mentally, the widened horizon carrying with it more varied interests and a less self-conscious outlook.

She is generally well educated and though not intellectual she has much natural facility. Her reading is light but ranges over the novels and works of the English, French and Italian writers, and it is not unusual to find her conversant and able to hold her own in discussing the literature of our country.

The influence and example of their beloved and beautiful English-born Queen, with her passion for out- of-door life and healthy exercise, her keen interest in country life and interests, the welfare and development





of the peasants' industries, has largely influenced and widened their outlook and extended the sphere of what used to be but a gay little butterfly existence. The last two years of suspense, while all Europe was battling against "Thuggism in Europe," has deepened her nature somewhat and roused the finer qualities dormant under the light exterior. A change, subtle and slight perhaps, but nevertheless foreshadowing the part she may be called upon to play in the stern tests and trials of the future.

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To the stranger it is perhaps the picture of the simple, hard-working peasant mother or wife that leaps to one's memory when thinking of the women of Roumania. The gay cosmopolitanism of the aristocracy, the comfortable independence and prosperity of the middle classes are more or less similar and familiar to the peoples of the West. But the peasant woman, whether she be building a house, working as hard as any man in the fields or farmyard, or rearing her large family with tireless love and devotion, is the real heart that feeds the nation's arteries. With

“ Kindly eyes ; lips grown softly sweet  
With murmured blessings over sleeping babes, A knowledge in  
their deep unfaltering eyes That far outreaches all philosophy ”

Her toil is ceaseless, her pleasures few. Her faith in Divine protection is illimitable and she patiently accepts all that comes to her in weal or woe as destiny—a fate unalterable.

At her loom the winter nights she sings the ballads of her country, keeping alight the ancient fighting tradi-



40 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY tions of her race, instilling the fire of patriotism into the hearts of her children.

Her sons are indeed the future swords of Roumania, but she is the soul of that land 1

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Before closing these brief glimpses of Roumanian life and customs and dipping into the past history of her people, I must include a short summary of those who by their genius and patriotic ardour have helped to mould the intellectual development of the country.

Among the most prominent of her poets are Vasile Alexandri and Michael Eminescu. The former, bom of good family, had a gracious sonorous muse, through which he sang of the beauties of his pastoral land, the grandeur of the mountain ranges, nature in her many phases. Like the *Haiducks*, the heroes of old, he sang to the

“ . . . Forest the wonders I see in my dreams,  
And the forest loves to hear the tale of my dreaming,  
More than the song of birds,  
More than the murmur of leaves.”

The best of these nature poems are included in his charming *Pastels*.

He devoted much of his life and great talent to collecting the very beautiful collection of folk-poems which the country is so rich in. He was the inspirer and mouthpiece for the dreams and aspirations of his awakening country, and in the easy flowing music of his verse vibrates the very heart and soul of his country people. Towards the end of his life he wrote some fine epic poems under the title of *Legends*.

Eminescu was of quite another strain. His was a fragile spirit which floated out, pale, mysterious and



tragic from the golden wake of Alexandri's tranquil dignity, and whom he thus described: " This king of poetry for ever young and happy." Eminescu's verse was of a delicate poignant beauty, reflecting as it were the lonely silver beauty of moonlight, the dark storm-driven clouds racing athwart her face, the deep-cut sombre shadows she casts on the world below and the subtle mounfulness of the *crepuscule* that heralds her approach. His form struck across the more conventional declamatory style of the nation's verse with a strange elusive harmony, profound, ironic, mournful. His work in comparison with Alexandri's is of a higher artistic quality and haunts one by its deep philosophy and melancholy charm. His sonnets are very beautiful, and his *Satires* vibrate with a verbal force and magnificence unequalled by other Roumanian singers. He was the first writer to emerge from the peasant world, for until his appearance, poetry, letters and art had been considered rather as an appanage of the aristocracy alone. But his life was a tragic one passed in a fierce struggle for material existence, amid trouble, poverty and ill-health, until exhausted by sickness and sorrow he died insane.

Cerna, a poet who died some years ago at Leipzig, was of great promise, and his death while quite young has been a great loss to Roumanian literature. His verse was very beautiful and full of philosophic optimism. He sang in ardent strain of the joy of life, of the wonderful moments of love, those moments which though transient represent the only approach to immortality granted us by the gods :—

“ If love is sin, then glory to Him who created it  
He made the sin so exceedingly beautiful,”



42 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY are lines he wrote in a poem regarding the fall of our first parents in Paradise.

As dramatists and writers Caragiale and Ion Creangă are well known. The former wrote delightful comedies, while Creangă—who was of peasant birth—has produced some very fine prose and is a writer who has published many interesting stories depicting the true mentality of the Moldavian peasantry.

Negruzzi and Zamfirescu are fine novelists—the former rather in the style of Sir Walter Scott—writing with literary and artistic value, while Sadoveanu and B. Voinesti are among representatives of the younger generation.

Titu Maiorescu's name as a critic is well known and he was the founder of the first serious literary review of Roumania, the *Convorbiri Literare*, which holds a deservedly high position, uniting under its banner the leading intellectual spirits of the generation.

In painting, Grigorescu is an artist of much merit, while Enescu as a musician and composer is well known to the *elite* of the musical world of Europe.

In the domain of history Xenopol holds an eminent position. He has written the *Istoria Românilor* in six volumes, and several works in French. Some years ago he was elected a member of the *Societe de Sociologie* in Paris in succession to the late Lord Avebury.

Iorga is one of the country's most distinguished and prominent writers. He has published a history of the Roumanian people, a history of the Ottoman Empire, and one on the Byzantine which has been translated into English. But it is not only as an historian that he can claim the proud position he holds in the eyes of





his countrymen, but also as the leading spirit in his country's intellectual development. His inspiring influence, his warm enthusiasm, his fine critical judgment, his astounding capacity for work and prolific creative faculty have been a great force in developing Roumania's literary life, and imparting to it its truly national character, and under his influence Roumanian literature has re-found its true path.

M. Beza, the Vlach poet and prose writer has a wide knowledge of history and a deep sympathetic understanding of his nomadic Macedonian kinsmen. His collection of stories, *Pe Drumuri* (on the road), are somewhat in the style of Turguenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches*. He was the first writer to translate into prose with a concentration of expression, a discretion of feeling, as the well-known critic of *Convorbiri*, S. Mehedintz, has said, the soul of the wandering Vlach. He has depicted the roving life of this very interesting people, their long caravans that creep over the road, winding towards the melancholy stillness of the hills, and their mysterious old-world rites and customs. A great admirer of English literature, he has written essays on Shakespeare, Carlyle, Ruskin, De QuincCy, Keats, from some of which he has translated into Roumanian as well as Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*.

Transylvania—the lost province—has contributed much to Roumania's intellectual development, and her exiled sons have shown how deep a bond of national union, Latin culture and undying devotion unites them to the motherland.

Among the poets from Transylvania Cosbuc, though never a great singer like Eminescu, stands very high in



44 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY the esteem of his countrymen. He combated to some extent the rather morbid atmosphere created by Eminescu's muse, and sang of Transylvania with a wealth of diction, a variety of expression and cadence that has placed him higher than any other Transylvanian poet. In a poem bearing the title "The Poet," he begins :

" I am a soul in my people's soul, And I . . . sing its joys and sorrows."

Octavian Goga and St. Iosif were also poets of Transylvanian birth—" brothers from the Ardeal." Goga launched forth his soul and brain with flaming ardour towards the cause of his martyred and oppressed kinsmen under Magyar tyranny. To his stirring verse and prose is partly ascribed the influence exercised on the Roumanian people in declaring war on the Central Powers. He represents in poetry the last note in *irredentism*, but in artistic quality he is inferior to Cosbuc or even to St. Iosif.

Iosif is best known for his *Patriarhale* and his *Croyances* which are full of a pure and delicate lyrical beauty. His poem "To Arms !" was sung by the troops on the first day of mobilization (1913) as they marched beneath the windows of his room where he lay, delirious and dying. He has translated Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, also Shelley's *To a Skylark*.

A curious and tragic fate seems to have haunted the lives of several of Roumania's sweetest singers. Anghel, a collaborator of Iosif, a poet of delicately passionate vein, committed suicide ; while Corina, Iosif's adored little daughter, to whom he had dedicated the most lovely of his poems, was blown to pieces by a Zeppelin bomb while playing in a garden in Bucharest. Chendi,



Iosif's friend and compatriot, a critic of no mean calibre, fell a victim to the same dread malady as his friend. Unable to face the pitiless, slow agony of disease he threw himself from the window and met a brutal but quicker end on the stones below.<sup>1</sup>

Again, Gârleanu and Ion Adam were other fine writers that an implacable destiny seemed to track and who finished their lives in suffering, in the full plenitude of their talent and before their fortieth year ! The best part of a literary generation—not counting the victims that may fall in war—have been wiped out, but the legendary vitality and endowment of the race will persist and new stars will surely shine forth to lighten a shadowed land.

<sup>1</sup> *La Revue*, 1917. Victor Eftimiu:



## CHAPTER III

### THE BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION

The Roumanian never dies.—*Old Proverb.*

**R**OUMANIA has a proverb, " Water flows, the rocks remain." To realize the truth of this and understand the Roumanians of to-day, one has only to glance back over the pages of their early history, and note the incessant waves of conquest, oppression and cruelty that swept over the country during sixteen centuries, and note too how every conqueror, in turn, tried to crush and submerge this Latin people under a welter of anarchy and chaos. But like rocks these storms only imbedded them the more deeply in the soil; and the torrent of barbarians enslaved and tortured, but never succeeded in annihilating them.

Roumania is by racial affinity a Latin country. There are, therefore, a few who affirm that neither geographically, ethnologically nor politically is she one of the Balkan Powers. Yet it can be safely asserted that in spite of a certain justification for this pose or position she is, nevertheless, by reason of her political and social evolution as historically developed, by her folk-lore, literature, art, and much of her national mentality undoubtedly a Balkan state.

With reference to the views of the minority, Mr. Seton Watson has said : " This is a pose which has its good and 46

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 47 its bad sides, and which, indeed, is true or false very much according to the way in which it is applied. But no serious student of

history can accept this pose, and it is a satisfactory sign of the times that the most distinguished historian of modern Roumania, Professor Jorga, is devoting much of his energy to making Bucharest a centre of Balkan historical studies, and is never tired of emphasizing the solidarity of Roumania and the other Balkan States. He is perfectly justified in arguing that the Roumanian element has always been one of the chief ‘ cultural ’ elements in the history of the Peninsula, and that history and geography have combined to assure to Roumania a still more prominent role in the future.”<sup>1</sup>

The Balkans lie south of the Danube—Roumania to the north of it. But proud though she may be of her Latin blood and tradition, which have made her the chief centre of culture in the Peninsula, much of her future development is indissolubly linked up with the Balkan States adjoining her, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece.

The origin of the Roumanian race, though much disputed, is clear on the main points. The earliest inhabitants of the Roumania of to-day were the Getse, or Dacians, who inhabited the shore of the Euxine south of the Danube, now called the Dobrudja. The Roman geographer Pliny tells us the former was the Greek and the latter the Latin name for this people.

Herodotus speaks of them in these early days as “ the bravest and most honourable of all the Thracian tribes.” They were very warlike, constantly fighting with the Greek colonies settled on the west coast of the Black Sea, and they even endeavoured to check the advance

*<sup>1</sup> Roumania and the Great War.*

48 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY of King Darius of Persia. About the year 390 B.c. they crossed the Danube, settling in the country north of it and increasing greatly in numbers as they acquired the rudiments of civilization. About 100 B.c. the Romans, advancing through Macedonia, came into conflict with them. The succeeding years constantly



saw them crossing the Danube to harry the Roman province of Moesia, now Bulgaria ; and in the fortified towns of the Black Sea, the inhabitants closed their gates at sunset, so fearful were they of these stem warriors.

Ovid, who was sent here in exile, describes the natives as having “ rough voices, savage features ; and a striking image of the god Mars.” That Mars was a good god to reflect in those early days is obvious, since life was one long fight for existence and the sword was a vital instrument of justice. But notwithstanding their rough exterior traits, this people were not invariably uncouth in thought or mind, and had worked out for themselves a philosophy of no mean standard. They believed in the migration of souls, and an immortality that regarded death as a prelude only to a greater world. Their sage and teacher, Zamolxis, taught them that submission of the body to the will was the true discipline, virtue the supreme good, and vice the only evil. Herodotus called them the “ Immortals,” for they never spoke of “ dying.”

The natural martial courage of the race proved a fine foundation for the superimposed layer of civilization introduced by the great Roman Emperor Trajan, who conquered the Dacians in A.D. 106. Their last King, Decebalus—a great chieftain, whose name, “ Strength of the Dacians,” speaks for his renown—was victorious over the Roman legions in the early part of his reign, exacting

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 49 an annual tribute from the Emperor Domitian. On the accession of Trajan in 98 B.c., a determined effort, in which no vigour was spared, was made to conquer this nation described by Pliny as an “ invincible enemy.” After desperate battles Decebalus had to surrender ; but no sooner was Trajan back in Rome than revolt broke out again. The revolt was crushed, no quarter being given on either side ; Decebalus, fighting to the last and seeing the fortunes of his side waning, committed suicide. Thus in 106

Dacia became a Roman province.

All who have ever been to Rome will remember the incidents of this great conquest, which have been immortalized by Apollodorus, the great Damascene architect, in the bas-relief of Trajan's column. Here stands a priceless commentary, in marble, on the history of the Dacians. It is a marvellous memorial of a great struggle between warring races, and part of this extraordinarily vivid picture in stone shows 2500 Dacian and Roman warriors locked in a deadly combat.

The great Trajan brought prosperity and wisdom, as well as the sword, to this martial race ; and fewer nations absorbed more quickly and less reluctantly the benevolent influence of a conqueror. So just was his rule, so judicious was the conduct of the Roman legions planted in the country to stem the rush of barbarians from the north, that the Dacians soon fraternized and actually intermarried freely with their vanquishers. The characteristics of the two races, the courageous and Spartan-like virtues of the ancient Dacians, and the equally martial but more highly developed qualities of Trajan's famous legions, were thus perpetuated in their offspring.

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## 50 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

It is an astonishing phenomenon and a striking example of the mysterious and virile influence of race, to see a nation after a lapse of sixteen centuries showing so unequivocally to-day its Latin strain, in its language—a “ soft bastard Latin ”—its physique, customs, habits and dress, and yet separated from its parent strain by half the width of a continent.

Under Trajan's rule schools were founded, cities and aqueducts built—the remains of which can still be seen ; also the wonderful Roman roads, so celebrated in many lands, were made, and exist in many places to this day. Of these, the best known, called by Trajan's name, cuts through the depths of the Carpathians at the celebrated Tumu Rosu or Red Tower Pass.

It is interesting to note that in the records of the allotment of the land to the inhabitants, the word “paternally” constantly appears ; denoting the politic and just administration of the great Emperor; while the world- renowned Edict of Caracullas—giving to every inhabitant of the Empire the privilege of calling himself a true-born Roman, a nomenclature upheld by the law—reconciled the conquered to the loss of their independence.

Dacia at this time was considerably larger than the Roumania of to-day, comprising Transylvania and Bukovina, now under Austrian rule ; Moldavia, the northern portion of the country ; Bessarabia, taken by Russia in 1878 ; and Wallachia, or Muntenia, as the Dacians or early inhabitants of Roumania called it. The country rapidly settled down under the Roman occupation, and became a flourishing province, its capital being Apulam, now Karlsburg. During the reign of the Emperor Aurelian, in 270, Dacia was abandoned by the Romans,



**THE "S'IXN'A," OR SHEPHERD BOY'S "DUG-OUT."**



**A DEAR OLD GRANNY SPINNING.**



**PEACEFUL LIVES IN THE OLD MONASTERIES.**



**“ PASTOR ■’ OR SHEPHERD BOY IN WINTER COAT.**

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 51 and the next thousand years saw this rich and beautiful land invaded and oppressed in turn by Huns, Goths, Slavs, and a wild, savage and debauched Turkish tribe, the Avars. The Goths and Slavs settled down in Hungary, Slavonia, Bosnia, etc., thus separating the Roumanians from the Latin race of their early origin.

These waves of tyrannical oppression, when horde after horde of savage tribes succeeded each other, are lost in the remote obscurity of the past, and only dim records of anarchy and chaos remain. But, strong and enduring, the Latin element in this race persisted, the one permanent feature in these dark ages of barbarism and conquest. Isolated and afar, on the outskirts of Europe, with Turks, Tartars and Huns sweeping constantly over them, their unquenchable spirit was never submerged, never extinguished and was even strong enough to filter through the savagery of the Gothic influence to a slight degree.

In the thirteenth century light slowly began to illumine these tragic days of the country's birth. The terrible tides of savagery gradually receded, and the inextinguishable spirit of the Roumanians—Daco-Romans, as some call the early Roumanians—gradually crept forth once more. In 1290, Radu Negru or Rudolph the Black, a wild mountain chief, came forth with many of the original colonists, who had fled with him to the caves and great forests in the mountain heights. With desperate courage this band of cave-dwellers gave battle to their foes, inflicting serious defeat upon them, and the Principality of Wallachia was created soon afterwards. Fired by this success Dragosch, another chieftain, successfully attacked and defeated the foe. An old legend tells us 52 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY that as Dragosch emerged from the Passes he came to the banks of a charming stream in a fertile land where much game abounded. Resting here, he called the stream Moldava and the land Moldavia, after his faithful hound and

constant companion, Molda. Conquering the country, he created the principality of Moldavia, and so from the welter and stress of the past, the kernel of present-day Roumania struggled slowly and painfully to life.

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The course of Roumania's evolution was destined to be by the bloody path of war, and the succeeding centuries were passed in a veritable vortex of turmoil, an eternal, interminable fight to resist the savage domination of the Turk.

It must never be forgotten that Roumania and the neighbouring nations, unconquerable in spirit, unceasing in sacrifice, stemmed the tide of vandalism during five ghastly centuries of cruelty and national abasement. Their heroism contributed in large measure to the general cause of civilization by enabling the nations of Western Europe to develop and pursue in peace their natural work of advancement and progress. History ever repeats itself; and again, in the twentieth century, these "little" nations, Serbia, Montenegro and now Roumania, have risen and heroically endeavoured to stem the advance of the reincarnated Hun, bestial and remorseless in his lust for conquest and blood.

In the glimpses we have of these far-off days the treachery and brutality of the conqueror alternate with examples of the stubborn tenacity, courage and vigour of a race that, fighting through centuries, refused to be exterminated, and many stirring episodes strike like

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 53 gleams of sunshine through the gloom and despair of these pages of distant history. Only one or two of the rulers of the Principalities can be mentioned in this bird's-eye view of the past. Mircea, the first great Prince of Wallachia—the rich grain-growing district stretching from the Carpathians along the banks of the Danube to the river Buzău—was a man of great intelligence and power. His reign extended from 1380-1418, and Xenopol describes him

as “ one of the most remarkable figures in the history of the Roumanian principalities.”

During his thirty-eight years’ reign he fought incessantly against the Turk, ever striving to free his Christian land. He summoned his army to the help of Serbia, ready to strike with her a blow for freedom against the infidel and tyrant, and although the Serbs were defeated and almost swept out of existence at the bloody field of Kossovo, his action prevented in some degree their complete extinction.

Few people realize that it was the Roumanian race that gave the two greatest heroes of the fifteenth century to history: John Hunyady, who led the Hungarian armies so victoriously against Islam ; and Stefan-cel- Mare, or Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia. The latter was one of the great outstanding figures of these turbulent early days, earning with Sobieski, Eugene and Hunyady a proud place as one of the four bulwarks of Christendom against the infidel invasion. Pope Sixtus IV called him the “ Athlete of Christ,” and wrote to him : “ The high deeds which thou hast accomplished against the infidel Turks have rendered thy name so glorious that all of one accord sing thy praises.” He not only repelled the Turks, who outnumbered his forces by three to one, 54 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY but also the Poles who invaded his territory. He made his capital at Bukovina ; and during his long reign of fifty years his country prospered greatly. A statue has been erected to him in Jassy, the old capital of Moldavia, to commemorate his efforts to realize the high ideals of the nation’s destiny. After his death the country again fell under the bitter yoke of Islam, the people were oppressed beyond endurance, and every revolt was suppressed with the utmost cruelty.

In 1593 Michael the Brave was chosen Prince. His reign is one of the most brilliant episodes in the history of the country, and his name as a great national hero is enshrined in the heart of his countrymen. He struggled so heroically against Magyars,



Poles and Turks that for a brief space his kingdom again reverted to its original size, and included Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, Bessarabia and the Bukovina—"The Greater Roumania" dreamed of by the patriots of to-day. He was a great leader of men, and the country acknowledged his genius with pride and devotion. He was extraordinarily successful in welding together the different clans, Overcoming their jealousy of each other, and training them into an army that achieved great and successful victories over the Turks and Hungarians. Again and again the Sultan sent his armies, led by his ablest generals, to subjugate his powerful young neighbour and bring him to heel, but once across the Danube, few of his legions ever lived to return.

Michael was betrayed by Austrian treachery at the height of his power. Austria, hard pressed and in difficulties, had appealed to him for help. Consenting to do so, he, at the head of his army, joined the Austrian

**BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION** 55 forces. Basta, the Austrian General, begged an audience of him on pretext of consulting him as to the disposition of the forces, then foully attacked and murdered him in his tent.

Into the brief period of his brilliant reign—only eight years—he compressed the arduous work and aims of a lifetime, and with his death the heroic period of Roumanian history comes to an end. His statue in Bucharest is, to the Roumanian citizen, what Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square is to us—the great patriotic rallying centre for the heartfelt desires and aims of the people.

A curious and very interesting point connected with his appointment to the throne lies in the fact that it was Edward Barton, the English Ambassador at the Porte, who used his influence with the Sultan in getting him chosen Prince. It is good to know in these present days of Roumania's agony, when her

eyes are turned towards England, the land of freedom, that in these far-off times it was an Englishman who realized the genius of this great Prince and was instrumental in helping him towards the regeneration of his country. His reign, however, was but a "brilliant intermezzo," for thus a distinguished Roumanian historian describes this splendid but alas ! too short, revival of the national spirit.

After his death the principalities again lapsed into a state of vassalage under the Turk. And yet they never succumbed so completely to the Turkish conqueror's rule as did their neighbours of Serbia, Bulgaria and even Hungary.

The Turkish conquerors did not dare to place their Pashas as administrators on the Moldavian or Wallachian thrones, even when Buda (now Buda-Pesth) was the 56 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY capital of a Turkish pasha. They contented themselves with other forms of oppression, and the exaction of a heavy annual tribute. Thus, though the native aristocracy of Serbia and Bulgaria was exterminated, the nobles or *boyars* of Roumania, though oppressed and powerless shadows, still fought for liberty and escaped extinction.

During the seventeenth century the principalities were at the mercy of inefficient native rulers, impotent and servile under the Greek influence which was asserting itself in the country. Many of these people had been attracted from Stamboul to a land where riches, in the shape of extortion, could be quickly exacted from a hopeless and voiceless peasantry. For in the words of an Italian envoy "the land sweated blood." There was no stability ; the *boyars* or nobles were always fighting and intriguing against each other, each striving for his own advantage with a complete disregard for the welfare of the people in general, their only bond in common being that they solidly united against the Greek aspirants for the thrones of the two Principalities.

Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries only three of these native rulers stand out with any distinction. Bassarab and

Vasile Lupu or Basil the Wolf are noteworthy as introducing a new era of law reform, and the development of a system of general culture. Bassarab started the first printing machine in Bucharest, and the first book printed was his collection of canon laws. Others quickly followed, and were printed in the Roumanian vernacular, displacing the Slav, which had up to then been the language of literature. Basil's criminal code, of an eye for an eye, though savage, was probably

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 57 a necessary prelude to any system of law and order. The punishments meted out were terrible.

He who committed arson was burnt alive.

He who seduced had boiling lead poured down his throat.

He who committed bigamy was strapped naked on a horse, and whipped through the streets of the town.

Sherban Cantacuzâne, who reigned in 1679, continued the work of general culture and enlightenment. He fostered the dawning spirit of national independence that flickered up for a moment, translated the Bible, and greatly aided by the help of a wonderfully clever and beautiful wife, established friendly and diplomatic relations with Russia, for the first time in the country's history.

But this flickering little flame of the nation's progress was soon extinguished, and for the next hundred years the Porte shamelessly sold the thrones of Moldavia and Wallachia to the highest bidder, the claimants to these precarious places being wealthy "Greeks of the Phanar who had been the lowest and most corrupt servants of the Porte." These Greeks, owing to their administrative ability, their astuteness, their gift of languages, French in particular, made themselves indispensable to the Porte. They amassed great riches and lived in the midst of luxury. In 1666 Paniotachus Nikussis was appointed Interpreter to the Divan. From this time until 1821 this office was

continually held by the Greeks as a family privilege.

Competition was keen among these ambitious Phana- riots—called so because of the proximity of their district to the great *Phanar* or lighthouse—and they enriched 58 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY themselves, repaying the vast sums of money they had spent in bribing the Porte, by extortionate taxation and levies on the unhappy country Roumania. The wily Turk, on the other hand, found this so sure a means of gratifying his inordinate cupidity, that the rulers were perpetually changing, and in the short space of 105 years no less than 70 *Hospodars* occupied the thrones of Wallachia and Moldavia !

As soon as one Governor or *Hospodar* retired another arrived with a fresh swarm of greedy retainers eager to squeeze the unhappy people. One of the Court physicians early in the present century describes the lives of these rulers and their Court as of Asiatic luxury, incompetence and extortion. They out-turked the Turk in their rapacity and ingenious devices for despoiling and taxing the wretched peasantry. Their lives were spent in an orgy of pleasure and ease. The noble *Hospodar* was almost too noble for the slightest exertion. Their bread and food were cut up for them. Some of them were indeed so indolent that they never walked but were carried by slaves and lifted from their bed to chair. Their *siesta* had to be ensured by the complete stoppage of all traffic or business in the city ; no voice was heard, no bells might sound !

The consorts of the *Hospodars* vied with their lords in extravagance and display. The dresses of one of these ladies cost £2300, a tremendous sum in those days. So jealous were they of their rivals, that when one of these amiable Princesses found a lady at Court dressing better than herself, she would persuade her husband to banish the sumptuously attired beauty until, her own wardrobe replenished and resplendent, she could invite her disgraced

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 59 rival to appear again and discomfit and spite her by a display of her own radiant apparel! This extravagance and ostentation naturally spread to the Roumanian nobles, who beggared themselves and ground down the peasantry in their desire to make a show. Divorce spread rapidly, and marriages were contracted for financial reasons, with resulting infidelity.

Some of these Phanariot rulers, however, were not all bad ; there were indeed one or two who were good rulers, who founded charitable institutions, built fine buildings, and tried to check the extravagance of the feudal landlords, " sleeping dogs," as the peasants called them ; but their reigns were short, their appearances few and far between. For the most part the princes and nobles were corrupt, and the peasantry and people in a deplorable condition.

It was during these dark days of the country's birth that Turkey transferred the fair province of Bukovina to the Austrians in 1777 ; and later, in 1812, Bessarabia, the most northerly portion of Moldavia, was given to Russia, notwithstanding the vigorous remonstrances of the Phanariot ruler Gregory Ghika, Prince of Moldavia, who took an heroic stand against the monstrous injustice and robbery, but was assassinated in consequence, falling to the yataghans of the Turkish emissaries.

The name Bessarabia is derived from the Bassarab dynasty who in the thirteenth century founded the first Wallachian principality. It has been connected with Roumania for centuries. In Northern Bessarabia the population is overwhelmingly Roumanian by race and speech, but in the southern corner, called Bugeacul— from the Turkish word *bujak*, " an out-of-the-way

60 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY comer,"

German colonists were permitted by the Czars to swarm into

the country, and a medley of races, Bulgars and Russian refugees, has resulted.

Russia's " theft " of Bessarabia poisoned good relations between the countries for many years and left an indelible mark on the mind of the people, and the repressive administration of the province only accentuates the bitter feeling.

Pitiful scenes were enacted on the shores of the " accursed river Pruth," a name that clings to it to this day. This river was now the barrier dividing the wellloved land ; separating homes and kinsmen on one side from the other, and leaving a wound as deep as the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine from France on the heart of the nation.

In 1822 the demand of Roumania for rulers of her own race was at last granted by the Porte ; the Phanariot rule came to an end and the rule of native *boyars* or Princes began. But the country was in a deplorable state, and but little improvement was made, for the nobles and Princes were constantly intriguing against each other, and any ruler with popular principles was denounced as a traitor to his caste.

Desperately the country turned her eyes to Russia for help, but the great White Czar dreamed of conquest, not aid. Roumania soon realized that no help could be looked for from them, and that a " Muscovite Liberator might be as harsh as a Greek Governor." It is from this time that one can date the rise of a strong anti-Russian policy, and the next fifty years were continually spent in endeavouring to maintain Roumania's independence against the stern autocracy of Russia, who, backed by

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 61 the Convention of Akermann, had been permitted by the Sultan to become the " predominant partner " over the Principalities. Extreme oligarchical principles were the feature of the Russian domination. The people had no rights, the nobles no duties.

Roumania, lying between Russia, Austria and Turkey, was ever a pawn in their envious designs; and was looked upon by each as a buffer acquisition, or as a hostage to bargain with. It is astonishing that the national spirit was not completely extinguished, and one can only attribute the fact to the inherently hopeful and vigorous Latin temperament of her people.

The advent of the French Revolution was the first strong light that pierced through the darkness, and encouraged the oppressed people to hope that deliverance was near. The indomitable national spirit, notwithstanding every repressive influence, had been slowly developing. Their ancient history, which showed an incessant struggle to maintain their national ideals, language and racial affinity during centuries of oppression, was a matter of just pride with this suffering people. Contact with their Latin sister France was eagerly welcomed, cultured ideas and aims were quickly imbibed through this Western friendship, which strengthened their spirit amazingly, an influence which has never ceased.

The Serbs were the first to regain their liberty; and not long afterwards Roumania was successful in casting out the Phanariot regime. In 1856, the Treaty of Paris accorded her the restitution of the Delta of the Danube, taken from her by Russia in 1812. France supported Roumania in her great desire to unite the two principalities under one rule. In 1858 the union of the two princi- 62 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY palities, the election of a foreign Prince, hereditary succession, and a monarchical government were at last granted.

Thus, after six centuries of incredible intrigue and bloodshed, the brave tempest-ridden little country secured her freedom, and Roumania as a nation was born. •

Alexander Cuza, the first Prince elected, had a difficult role to fulfil, having to submit to a double investiture of the two principalities, and the perplexity of maintaining two separate

ministries. In 1861, however, this was simplified by the Porte granting the union of the two Assemblies ; and on December 23rd of that year, the Prince in a proclamation to his people was able to announce that " The Roumanian nation is founded."

During the eight years of his reign many reforms were accomplished ; the most noteworthy being the foundation of the two Roumanian Universities, one at Bucharest and one at Jassy ; the severance of the Church from the corrupt Greek Patriarchate ; the sequestration of the monasteries, their lands and treasures ; and finally the emancipation of the peasantry, the granting to them of land, and their release from some of the most onerous of their feudal obligations.

By the promulgation of this law freehold property in lots varying from seven to fifteen acres was conferred on each peasant according to the number of oxen he possessed. The man with two oxen got ten acres, of four oxen, twelve to fifteen acres. As a result of this most of the peasants have now their little holdings, but the smallness of them renders any scientific farming difficult excepting by co-operation, and many of the peasants can

**BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION** 63 live only by working for the proprietors of the big estates, often get into difficulties and fall into the hands of the Jews. Thus the position is not very satisfactory.

Notwithstanding the extreme irregularities of his private life and his despotic disregard of constitutional forms, Cuza stands out as a Prince beloved—and even adored by the peasants—whose hard lot he had done so much to ameliorate.

His devotion to and too hasty adoption of French ideals and institutions proved premature and unwise in a country not yet prepared for such innovations. He had also the misfortune to arouse the antagonism of the great families by his suspension of the freedom of the Press— then only in the early stages of its



existence—and by the excesses of his private life. The general dissatisfaction culminated in February, 1866, when he was forced to abdicate and disappeared from the country.

\* \* \* \*

The Count of Flanders, father of the present heroic King of the Belgians, was offered the throne but declined it ; and Prince Charles of Hohenzollem, a connection of the Prussian Kaiser, was appointed. “ Accept it,” advised Bismarck, “ it will at any rate be an agreeable souvenir for your old age.” His election so displeased Austria that, disguised and travelling second class in order to avoid attention—with a small suite of two who travelled first class—and armed with a passport describing him as one Charles Hettinger, he travelled through Austrian territory to his new country. He alighted at Tumu Severin, the frontier of his adopted land, on May 8th, 1866, at the very spot the great Trajan had entered in A.D. 106.

#### 64 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

The task Prince Charles had undertaken was one of magnitude. The country had been bled white by long centuries of oppression, “ corruption and immorality in high quarters, misery and subjection in the lower ; its finance in an appalling muddle, the army in a deplorable state of administrative disorder.”

The choice of their ruler, however, proved fortunate, and the Prince showed himself fully capable of attacking the urgent problems that faced him and building up the Roumanian nation. The natural vigour and endurance of this much-tried race proved them worthy of every effort; and endowed as they were with great advantages in mind and character, the people quickly responded to efforts on their behalf.

The heart of the people was aroused ; and running strongly through their blood was the pride of race that had so long escaped annihilation. They believed that the genius which had

ever confronted despair with courage, and faith in the country's ultimate destiny, would enable them to build up a worthy future. Prince Carol did not disappoint their expectations. Shrewd and canny, he guided his country rather than drove it.

The country was equally fortunate in the selection of the Queen, for in 1869 Prince Carol married the gifted Princess Elizabeth of Wied, so well known to the whole world as Carmen Sylva. She proved a wonderful consort and helper to the Prince in the development of her adopted country.

A woman of much beauty of mind and character, she threw herself heart and soul into promoting the welfare of her people, and her devotion to the King provided an unexampled picture of domestic happiness not often seen

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 65 in royal unions. Her simple innocent nature, the deep interest and sympathy she extended to the poor and the suffering, and her devoted nursing of the wounded during the Russo-Roumanian-Turkish War, endeared her much to the people. Indeed, the name they gave her, Mama Regina—Mother Queen—proves the deep affection felt for her by all classes. Even had she not been bom in the purple, her literary and poetical attainments would have ranked high, and she was without question one of the outstanding personalities of her time. She published over fifty volumes, through all of which runs the spirit of sincerity, sentiment and the appreciation of beauty which was so characteristic of her poetical temperament.

Her *Pensees* (*Tune Reina*, decorated by the Academie Française, shows a deep knowledge of life, a delicate wit and satire, an understanding of humanity, love, happiness and duty quite exceptional. The *Pensees* are so well known that it is only necessary to mention a few of them.

“A woman is stoned for an action a perfect gentleman can do with impunity.”

“The faults of your husband or your wife are insupportable

only as long as you insist on correcting them ; you should put up with them as you do the smell of your dog, because you like him."

" Piety is the nostalgia of a lost paradise."

Among her plays the best known is *Meșterul Manole*, which was performed in Vienna before the Emperor. The story is such a touching one, and though dating from the fifteenth century, is so characteristic of the belief held to this day by the Roumanians of the rural districts, that it is worth relating.

## 66 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

During the building of the great cathedral at Curtea d'Arges, near the Carpathians, where the Royal family are buried, the master builder Manole omitted to secure its stability by burying a live human being within its walls, in consequence of which the walls were always crumbling. Finally it was decided to revert to the ancient practice and immure the first person who passed by-

It happened that the lovely young wife of Manole, bringing him food and wine, passed that way, with the result that the workmen seized her and built her within the walls. Her husband was away on business, and to his tragic despair arrived too late to save her. Her terrified screams and sobbing gasps as she slowly suffocated are said to be heard sometimes proceeding from the old walls. Even to this day this ancient custom is followed in part, and a builder will catch the shadow of a passer-by on a length of wood which he will enclose in the wall of the house he is building.

In Queen Elizabeth, Roumania possessed an influence which fostered and encouraged the cause of national art and letters with the full force of her enthusiastic nature and keenly artistic mind. She delighted to call herself the friend of the great poet Alexandri, he who collected the priceless treasures of folk-lore, ballads and legends composed by the people in the past and transmitted orally to their descendants through generations, and

which have been delightfully translated into French.

Her life was greatly saddened by the death at the age of four years of their only child, the lovely little Princess Marie, “*l'enfant du soleil*,” as the devoted parents called her. As no other children blessed their union Prince

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 67 Carol's nephew, Prince Ferdinand of Hohenzollem, was invited to the country as heir presumptive ; and in 1893 he married Princess Marie, eldest daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, granddaughter of Queen Victoria and the Czar Alexander I of Russia.

\* \* \* \*

The early years of Prince Carol's reign were devoted to the advancement of the country in many directions. Slowly, backed by the steadfast confidence of the people in their future, reforms were accomplished and progress made such as could not have been possible had he not found the moment ripe, and the people determined to support him, and sacrifice themselves for the advancement and benefit of their country.

His chief efforts were directed towards the reorganization and development of the Army, for which his early training in a crack Prussian regiment had qualified him. When he came to Roumania in 1860 the Army consisted chiefly of raw levies armed for the most part with old rifles, sabres or pikes, lacking in all kinds of equipment. But his training under the great Moltke had well fitted the Prince for the organization necessary.

The Roumanian Army is principally a peasant one and resembles in quality the Bulgarian and Serbian. Military service is obligatory. Every male able to carry arms must be incorporated from the age of twenty into one or another branch of the service. Substitution is not permitted, only the clergy and the infirm are exempt, and in time of peace when an only son supports his family.

The army is divided into two elements : (1) the Active Army

and the Reserve ; (2) the Territorial Army. Every soldier serves seven years in the Active Army and twelve 68 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY years in the Reserve. The duration of actual active service with the colours is two years for infantry, three years for artillery, cavalry and engineers, four years for the navy. The Active Army is divided into two parts—the Permanent and the Territorial. The number needed for each is decided every year by the Senate, and lots are drawn which decide the entry into one or the other ; the small numbers into the Territorial. The soldiers of the Permanent Army are in garrison for two or three years. The duration of service in the Territorial, where the men enter at forty years old, lasts six years. The Active Territorial Cavalry, which is a kind of peasant yeomanry, each man furnishing his own horse, implies an active service reduced to training periods and manoeuvres—somewhat on the Swiss model—but lasting four years instead of three. (The details of organization of the army just before the war with figures supplied officially by the Roumanian authorities are found in the *Almanach de Gotha*.)<sup>1</sup>

This arrangement suits better an agricultural country like Roumania ; it renders the upkeep of an army less costly, and does not take from the soil so many important workers.

Though the Territorials do not have so long a period of military instruction as those of the Active Army they are none the less extraordinarily good soldiers, and in the war of 1877, when they composed two-thirds of the infantry, fought with such tenacity and dash against the Turks under Osman Pasha on the bloody field of Plevna

<sup>1</sup> The organization in the present war and specially the actual figures and details on the reorganized Roumanian Army which won immortal fame at the battle of Marasesti can, for obvious reasons, not be given now.

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 69 that they added a splendid page to Roumanian military history.

Russia repaid Roumania's valuable military assistance with

base ingratitude. Bessarabia, the most fertile portion of her Moldavian territory—which had been reunited to her after the Crimean War—was arbitrarily annexed by the Czar, and the only compensation Roumania got for her help consisted of the barren marsh lands of the Dobrudja—south of the Danube Delta. This territory possessed no military frontier and contained a mixed population of Turks, Bulgars and Roumanians. Even the town of Silistria, in the ceded territory, was denied her ; and the Powers, blind to the injustice of this treatment, did not move in the matter. Small wonder that the loss of Bessarabia—Roumania's from time immemorial—should rankle in the nation's heart and render her attitude to Russia somewhat distrustful.

The agrarian position was in an exceedingly unsatisfactory condition when Prince Carol came to the throne. The *boyars* or nobles held all the land, the peasants had no land rights, and their days were mostly spent in toil for their masters. The *Tchnivnick*, or petty official so well known in Russia, was as much of a curse here as in the Empire of the Czar. One of the Prince's first acts was to reduce the power and tyranny of these officials by providing the peasants with small holdings. This naturally met with much opposition from the nobles ; but nevertheless the act was passed.

The position of the simple hard-working Roumanian peasant is not nearly so favourable as that of his fellows in Serbia and Bulgaria, and more than one agrarian revolt has broken out. Indeed in 1907 the capital was in 70 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY imminent danger of falling into the hands of the infuriated peasantry, who pillaged, burnt and destroyed all they could lay hands on. Their greatest hatred was directed against the Jewish middlemen, who by their unprincipled tyranny provoked the full force of the peasants' wrath. Since then various reforms have been introduced — village banks, cheap credit, with a healthier, simpler system of

contracts and land administration. The conditions have undoubtedly greatly improved, but much still remains to be done for the finest asset of Roumania's strength and progress, her peasantry.

With regard to its commercial, industrial and agricultural development, the country has made gigantic strides. Agriculture is one of the great industries of the country, three-quarters of the country being under cultivation, while the production of maize nearly equals that of America. Indeed, she can be considered as standing third among the great grain-producing countries of the world, coming after the United States and Russia. At Braila and Galatz, thriving towns on the mouth of the Danube, with populations of 70,000 and 80,000, the Government has built immense warehouses and elevators for the export of the precious cereal.

The soil is very rich, being the celebrated "black earth," and the country is well watered; beet, sugar and tobacco are easily grown. There are many vineyards, and Roumania ranks fifth amongst the wine-growing countries, producing excellent wines of a far better flavour than the sourjuxtiture found in Serbia and Bulgaria.

The country possesses great natural resources and the spirit of progress is there. It only awaits help and aid,

**BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION** 71 when it will undoubtedly develop extensively, for the country, especially in the Carpathians, is rich in silver, iron, copper, quicksilver, lead, tin, arsenic, cobalt, etc. Relations between Roumania and Britain have hitherto been slight, owing largely to ignorance and indifference. Unfortunately though France dominates the social and intellectual world the Germans and Austrians hold the economic and have enriched themselves accordingly. For fourteen millions of French exports Germany sends a hundred millions. Only thirty years ago France exported thirty-five millions of articles to five of German. But the Boche

is no favourite, and Roumania would welcome closer economic and social relations with England.

Salt is found in abundance and the mines at Okna are worked by the convicts, who receive a small wage. Great wealth exists in the vast forests of timber—seven million acres of which are carefully preserved—comprising oak, beech, walnut, pine, maple, which when felled are easily drifted down the Danube to the various countries, or to the Black Sea for export.

With the exception of grain, petroleum is perhaps the richest of Roumanian products, over two million tons a year being the output, and over twenty millions of foreign money is invested in the wells. The petroleum is superior to that of the Caucasus ; and at Kustendy, on the Black Sea, large tanks and refineries have been erected whence it can be shipped all over the world.

Prince Carol's instinct for financial transactions, and a certain thrifty disposition inherited from his Teutonic and French forbears—his mother was a connection of the House of Bonaparte—have proved of service in guiding

## 72 ROUMANIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

the wise development of the country's resources. Indeed, so ably were they conducted that in 1906 the Budget reached the highest figure ever recorded in Roumanian finance.

Roumania is unlike the countries that surround her in that she possesses a regular system of party government, a constitutional monarchy resembling in character that of Great Britain more closely than any other European state.

The Legislature is composed of a Parliament of two Houses. The Senate consists of 120 members elected for eight years, including the bishops and university representatives. The Chamber of Deputies has 183 members elected for four years. They must not be under twenty-five years of age, receive twenty francs a day for actual attendance and free travel on the railways. There are two political parties: the Liberals, whose chief,



Bratianu, son of the well-known statesman who encouraged King Carol in his decision to fight with Russia against Turkey in 1877. was Prime Minister for twelve years. He is a man of intelligence and agreeable personality, and possesses the confidence of both King Carol and his successor.

The leader of the opposition and head of the Liberal-Conservative party is the brilliant and keenly pro-ally statesman Take Jonescu, the true leader of the Roumanian Irredentist party. His shrewd intellect, wide vision, and great oratorical powers have gained him a great following ; and his reputation in Western Europe stands deservedly very high.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a great leap forward of the nation's prosperity. Indeed,

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION 73 so marked was the country's progress, so great the vigour and mental *elan* of the people, able at last to develop on free lines, so triumphant the success of the Roumanian armies who went to the relief of the Russians in the Russo-Turco War in 1877, that the just culmination of the nation's efforts was reached in 1881, when Prince Carol was proclaimed a King. He was crowned with an iron crown, made from one of the cannon captured at Plevna ; and the principality finally emerged among the Powers a recognized kingdom.

When the Balkan War of 1913 broke out Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece allied themselves together to cast out the hated tyrant, the Turk, from Europe. Roumania maintained an attitude of neutrality ; but when Bulgaria turned traitor to her Allies in true Bulgarian spirit and attacked them, Roumania intervened in order to maintain the right of small nations to exist.

In 1914 King Carol died. His reign, which lasted fortyeight years, was undoubtedly the turning-point in Roumanian history, for the country was transformed from a corrupt and oppressed vassal of the Turks, living in a state of anarchy and chaos, into the first of the Balkan Powers, and the seventh amongst the

independent states of Europe. She stands seventh in the way of population, her territory exceeds in size that of Portugal, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark or Holland as well as any of the other Balkan states. Her army takes rank immediately after those of the six great Powers, and so greatly has her trade increased that it very nearly equals the combined amount of Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece.

One cannot, however, overlook the fact that owing to his origin King Carol made the political miscalculation 74 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY with regard to his people of believing that their future development lay along Teutonic lines. German capital largely financed the country's economic progress, and implicit faith in the star of Germany's power rendered him blind to the organization of strategical railways, factories for army equipment and arsenals, and finally led him to conclude a secret treaty with the Central Powers without the consent of his people.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HEART OF ROUMANIA

**L**ITTLE has been known of Roumania by the general public, yet as far back as the fifteenth century English travellers penetrated into this beautiful land of wild romantic scenery. Beaumont and Fletcher in one of their plays mention the palace of the King of Moldavia—the northern portion of old Roumania—whose daughter Pomponia greets her father's guest in these words :

“ Welcome, Sir Knight, unto my father's court.

King of Moldavia ; unto me Pomponia, his daughter dear.”

William Lithgow, an ancient traveller, describes in his quaint *Totale discourse of the Rare Adventures* in 1656 that he found in Moldavia and Transylvania " a friendlie people, the very vulgars speaking frequent Latine.”

Perhaps the most interesting of these early records is the description of one William Harebone, a merchant sent by our shrewd, far-seeing, good Queen Bess as an agent to open up commercial enterprise between Turkey and the adjacent states, and the mention of " the earliest treaty signed between England and Roumania " in 1582. He relates how " I departed from Constantinople with 30 persons of my suit and family the 3 of August. Passing through the countries of Thraciao now called Roumania, the Great Valachia and Moldavia where arriving the 5 of September I was according to the Grand Signior 75

76 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY his commandement, very courteously interteined by Peter, his positive prince, a Greeke by profession with whom was

concluded that her Maiesties subjects there trafiguing should pay but three ; upon the hundreth which as well as his owne subjects as all other nations answeare; whose letters to her Maiestie be extant : whence I proceeded into Poland, where the high chancelor sent for me the 27 of the same moneth.”<sup>1</sup>

One admires the spirit of this fine old English burgher travelling with his "family" in those troublous far-off times, through " savage " Eastern Europe. It is a courageous spirit inherent in the race.

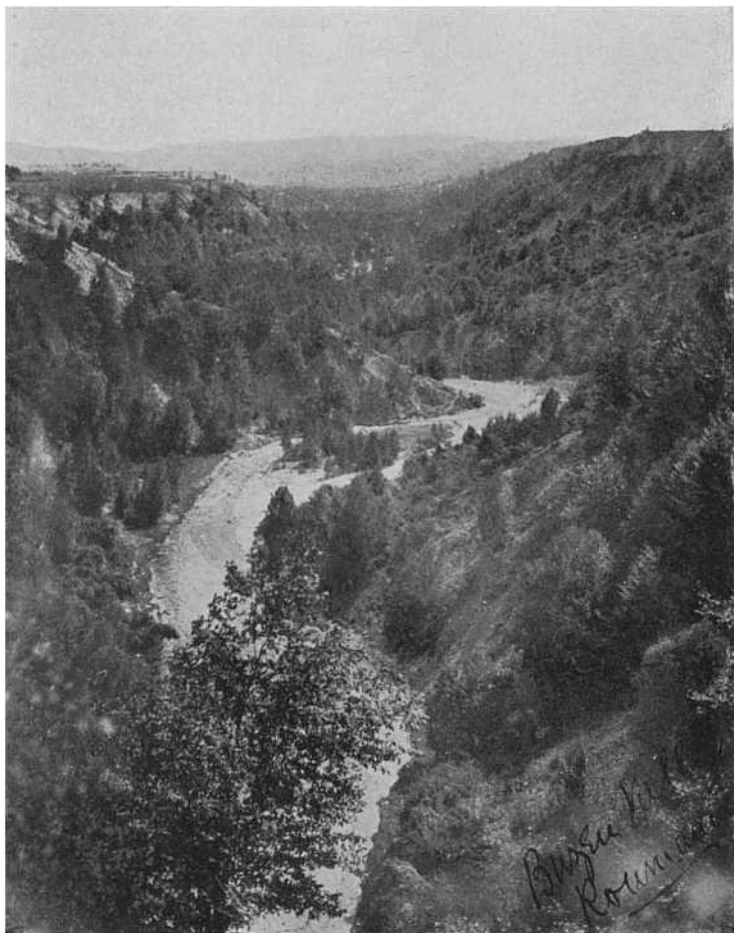
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For the sympathetic traveller, Roumania captivates with an irresistible attraction. The clear beauty of the sky, the limpidity of the atmosphere, the fertile plains, the wooded hills sheltering the great white monasteries with their shining cupolas hold a peculiar fascination for those who can appreciate the gentle poetic charm of the land.

From the picturesque point of view the country presents beauties as varied as any to be found in the Pyrenees, the Apennines and in many parts of Switzerland. The austerity of the great peaks, the beauty of the forest-covered ranges, the sombre gorges, the rich valleys, wide plains of waving grain, the strange melancholy of the lonely plateaux and the majestic sweep of the great Danube have as yet drawn few travellers and the world in general hardly knows of the beauties to be found here.

The long line of the Danube which rises far away in

<sup>1</sup> M. Beza, *English Historical Review*, No. 126, April, 1917.



**WILD AND BEAUTIFUL SCENERY OF THE BUZEU VALLEY.**

By permission of the *I'inies*



A ROUMANIAN CHURCH.



A PEASANT'S COTTAGE.

the Black Forest totals in its entire length 3000 kilometres. As it approaches Balkan lands it flows through the Iron Gates, called thus by the Turks, not because of any towering heights, for the hills have gradually descended, but from the ragged rocks lying submerged in the waterway. From here the north-western bank is Serbian for fifty miles, while the southern one to the Black Sea is Bulgarian—a distance of 290 miles.

The river enters Roumanian territory by Verciorova or Kazan, the Cauldron, and debouches by three great water-ways, the Kilia, the Sulina and the St. George, into the Black Sea. At Verciorova it resembles a great lake, and towering above it are precipitous hills varying from 1000 to 2000 feet high, and like most of the mountains in Roumania covered with forests of birch and pine. At this spot the channel is not more than about 120 yards wide and the depth about thirty fathoms, but as it flows eastwards it widens and gains in depth also. There are about three hundred islands between Verciorova and the Black Sea, some are of sand and reeds, others have good pasturage for flocks and are covered with willows. Few towns are passed, here and there are thatched villages with landing-stages for the steamers that ply up and down, but as the mighty waterway rolls east the greater part of the Roumanian shore is a desolate fen country varied here and there by low hills and long lagoons.

The Danube is to the country what the Nile is to Egypt, the stream of life, a gift precious and sustaining. It is fed from the moment it passes Verciorova almost entirely by Roumanian streams. On the Bulgarian side only the Isker and the Yantra flow into it, and only one Serbian river the Timok. The rains of autumn, the melting snows in spring swell the streams that feed the great waterway as it rolls broadly to the sea. It is therefore only just and legitimate that the Delta—which is nothing less than Roumanian soil torn from the land by the fret of the river—should belong to Roumania.

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From the bird's-eye point of view Roumania can be likened to a great amphitheatre, the highest points of this semicircle being the Carpathian ranges, which descend gradually by the lower hills and so to the interior of the country, the great plains. Thus we have three zones, alpine, forest and steppe. In the alpine regions of the Carpathians the eastern sides are rent in gorge-like seams, whose violently contorted strata form deep transverse valleys inclining laterally towards the south-east. The peaks, many of them 8000 to 10,000 feet high, are bare and jagged with shoulder coverings of moss and lichen ; their lower slopes rest in deep forests of pine, birch and larch, while far below in the gorges tumble and plunge and roar the noisy mountain streams.

Up in these lonely passes are many deep caves, now the lairs of the wolf and bear, but in times long gone, the sanctuaries to which the peasants fled when their lands were devastated by the ferocious Tartars, Turks and Huns. Near the old Saxon colony of Rosenau stands in inaccessible seclusion the Peasants' Stronghold, grimly fortified by nature to protect her sons against the conqueror of the lower lands ; close by is another natural fortress, the Knight's Castle with its view of pinnacled crags and peaks and the wide plain beyond.

Amongst the wild pathless mountains where foot-





## THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 79

tracks are known only by the shepherds, where the eagle soars and screams, and the chamois bounds and leaps, the peaks have been invested by the peasants since ancient times as sacred to the gods and analogous with the human form.

Up their slopes go the processional pines, dark, motionless, mysterious. Deep primeval forests, they seem to hold in silent keeping the memories of the heroic struggles of the Roumanians throughout the centuries ; the long fight to maintain the sacred traditions of their race, the sonorous language of their forefathers and their belief in Divine justice and faith in their destiny.

Far below the rugged rocks, gleams a quiet mountain lake reflecting the opal and gold of the sky athwart the clear-cut shadow of the peaks, and in between the maze of heights are deep ravines with the crying of innumerable torrents breaking the solemn stillness as they hurtle from rock to rock to the purple depths below.

Look eastward and the setting sun will catch with a quiver of gold the cupolas of the great monastery and cathedral of Curtea de Arges, built by Neagoe Bassarab and his wife Despina of Serbia in 1518. For centuries Moldavia and Wallachia had been nothing more than great roads over which the barbarian hosts had poured on their way from the East westwards, and many of the fine old monasteries and churches at Jassy, Horez, Padule, Cozia, built by the Voivodes or princes, had been pillaged or partially destroyed by the Turks and others.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were a period of considerable activity in what is now called Roumania, and Bassarab and his consort were determined that Curtea de Arges should excel in beauty all that had gone before. It is one of the most imposing churches in Europe and a famous specimen of Byzantine art, a mingling of the Arab and the Roman, eminently

characteristic of the Roumanian art of the fifteenth century, and in the days of its early glory must have been very magnificent. The cathedral was restored by King Carol in 1866 and is very rich in beauty of decoration, of frescoes, mosaics, glorious bronzes and gleaming marble, and stands like a “ fragment of the sun ” as the people call it, in charming country surroundings facing the long range of mountains. It has withstood fire, earthquakes and the violence and fury of barbarian invasions. In the interior are the tombs of the founder, his successors, and here also is the Royal mausoleum of the present dynasty.

To the north and south of Azuga under the shadow of Mont Sinaia among magnificent forests and flower-strewn valleys lies Sinaia, one of the beauty spots of Europe, with its old Greek Orthodox monastery, built by Michael Cantacuzăne in the fifteenth century. It is the summer resort of the Roumanian *beau monde*, and here on its wooded heights stands the fine palace of the King, Castle Pelesh, full of treasures of art both Oriental and European. The Germans were so eager to possess this rich booty that they refrained from bombarding it at the beginning of the war.

The mountain tops sink one by one to lower levels till they reach the second zone, the “ district of vines ” as it is called, the lush, fertile undulating land where fruits and flowers grow so abundantly. Far away to the east may be caught a glimpse of the distant gilded domes of the stately Byzantine monastery and cathedral at

THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 81 Câmpulung, the ancient city and residence in olden times of Rudolph the Black, founder of the Bassarab dynasty.

Beyond this the ground slopes to the vast plains—the famous Russian “ black earth ” which carries such rich yields of wheat and maize within its wide bosom.

As they approach the great waterway of the Danube they

merge into a monotonous level steppe of scant grasses, weeds and stunted shrubs intersected with reed beds and farther east long lagoons.

These great plains stretching to the far horizon remind one of the prairies of Mexico and Canada, and reflect all the soft shades of rose, mist grey, brown, green and burnished gold. The sun blazes benevolently, ripening royally the vast expanse of grain and maize. Water is rare, and hardly a tree can stand the glacial winter blasts that blow from the Siberian steppes, or the torrid heat of summer. Flat as a billiard table the boundless plain stretches away and away, broken only by the little hamlets, the colour of the soil itself, and the great upstanding arms of the wells that point upwards like an exclamation to the sky.

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South of the Danube lies the wild bare Dobrudja, a tongue of the Balkan plateau. This debatable land, the cradle of many fighting races since remote times, sprang into the public eye at the end of the Balkan War, when, at the treaty of Bucharest, Roumania acquired an additional strip of it at the expense of Bulgaria in order to balance her strategical frontier. It is an ancient high road, unceasingly worn by the nations who swarmed and fought for centuries to force their way from the bleak G

82 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY steppes and mountains of the north, towards the sunny promise of the TEgean Seas.

Towards the centre, the higher hilly tableland lies like a saddle between the Balkans and Southern Russia, and Baba Dagh (old mother), the highest of these hill ranges (1700 feet), looms towards the broad Danube lying to the north. The last spurs of this range lie close to Tulcea and Braila, where a few crossings can be made over the great river. These are the historic gates through which the Northern hordes passed in ancient

times, ravaging and destroying, and against whom Trajan's mighty forces were sent to stem that barbaric invasion that aimed at the looting of the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. Along this rude grey region, the great Emperor constructed the historic Trajan's Wall, parts of which are still in existence, with its triple consecutive barriers of defence, its deep entrenchments, measuring from ten to twenty feet wide, and fortified camps placed at intervals.

Over the barren steppes of the Dobrudja, where hardly a tree exists or running water is to be found, the Goths and Slavs descended on the Byzantine Empire some hundreds of years ago. Here also the Tartars swarmed on their way to loot the wonders and riches of Constantinople. Through the Danubian marshes and over this desolate arid land of sand and limestone, Russia marched in 1812 to fight against the infidel for the Greek Orthodox Church and the liberation of her Slav sister Bulgaria.

Can history show a more despicable instance of a nation's perfidy ! the deep ingrained treachery and ingratitude of the Bulgar nature !

The eagerly grasped thirty pieces of German silver

THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 83 that bought her honour—her ruler the venal tool of his Teutonic master—the snarling fury with which she cast aside the Russian hand that brought her her freedom 1 Could eyes of stone hurl glances—could lips of stone form speech, what thunderbolts of condemnation would the great statue of the Czar Liberator standing in the heart of Sofia—the shameless city—hurl forth at the traitors to the Slav race!

\* \* \* \*

Here in this wild no man's land, useful only as a barrier between the hostile nations, are collected the flotsam and jetsam of neighbouring tribes, the debris of many nations, fugitives persecuted or revolutionary, they seek in its barren bleakness the

sanctuary denied them in their own country.

In the little settlements of low mud huts dwell Jews, Armenians, Turks. “They are all the driftwood of the storms of history.” The Tartars in the Dobrudja are fragments of the Golden Horde which withdrew from Southern Russia when the country passed under Christian domination. Among the Little Russians, descendants can be found of Cossack rebels, of the followers of Nekras- soff, and of the even more famous Mazepa; among the Great Russians prevail all kinds of quaint religious sects, who in the days of persecution had abandoned their homes—Dukhobors and Old Believers, Molokans and *Bezrapovtsi*—“having no priests.” The latter a curious sect who slay their priests in order to have an intermediary to plead for them when they enter paradise.

Of this lone land of many scattered races it has been written, “On forlorn shores I have discovered humble hamlets where Turks dwell in solitary aloofness. Near 84 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY the broad Danube I have strayed amongst tiny boroughs inhabited by Russian fisher-folk, whose type is so different from that of the Roumanian peasant. At first sight one recognizes their nationality—tall, fair-bearded giants, with blue eyes, their red shirts visible from a great way off. It is especially in the Dobrudja that these different nationalities jostle together. Besides Roumanians, Bulgarians, Turks, Tartars, Russians, in places even Germans, five peacefully side by side.”<sup>1</sup> But the Roumanian steadily gains ground on the other populations.

The villages are lonely, poor, scanty of tree shelter, and often wind and sand swept. The houses and the huts of the poorer are built of wattle and thatch with queer hidden little courtyards, tiny gardens and the shrouded windows of the harem quarters of the Turks. The Mussulman women glide past us in their wide gathered-in trousers, with long coats or mantles drawn over their mouths ; the dim shapes in their garments of soft sun-stained old

colours pass leisurely along close to the walls and down by the dusty whitewashed old mosque with its faded carpets and rows of old shoes lying in the sun. Far above the Muezzin is voicing his midday cry to prayer :

“He turns around the parapet, Black-robed against the marble tower ; His singing gains or loses power In pacing round the minaret.

A brother to the singing birds, He never knew restraining walls, But freely rises, freely falls The rhythm of the sacred words.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ***My Country.*** H.M. the Queen of Roumania.

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Mrs. Harold Nicolson.





Northward, on the vast swamps and marshes of the delta an extraordinary and strangely interesting phase of life is found. In spring, between April and July, the whole land—a distance of about 1500 square miles— becomes a vast lake. Here and there are dotted little islands struggling to keep their heads above the waste of waters. In the summer the lake recedes and rich fields emerge gay with brilliant flowers and lush grasses, intersected by deep still pools and wandering streams. In many parts the land is below the level of the Black Sea, and therefore cannot be drained. Little is known about this region beyond that it is considered to be a vast inland lake.

Dr. Antipa, the Director of the Museum of Natural History at Bucharest, tells us some interesting facts about this queer, semi-amphibious world where there is no firm footing for the sole of man, and only a few hardy adventurous fishermen brave the uncertainties of the aquatic life by building their slender huts of reeds on the extraordinary floating islands made of matted weeds called *plaur*. These grow together so thickly that they form mats nearly three feet thick.

The whole delta abounds in animals who find here a safe refuge from the snare of man, and whose principal enemy is the sudden engulfing flood that rises from below, sweeping all before it. The wolves, boars, the foxes, wild oxen and thousands of swamp pigs all know how to swim, and their instinct teaches them the approach of this enemy. The mice and rats are the first to convey the warning, and the wild cats, and the hares, the only animals that can't swim, run for their lives to the tree tops. On the shallow floating islands of ■*plaur* are magnificent low willow trees whose spreading branches form the arks that yearly carry thousands of animals in safety through the floods.

One wonders how they live during these desperate days ! gnawing the shoots, eating the bark, preying upon their weaker kind, but often dying of starvation and exhaustion.

The whole delta is a wonderful fishing ground and well

## 86 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

repays the hardy fisher who ventures there. It is said that during the season of 1907 the Danube rose twenty feet, and that more than thirteen million pounds of fish were caught in the delta. Rarely does the latter freeze sufficiently, even in the very severe winters prevalent there, to allow any movement across. Indeed in this last severe and terrible winter of war, nature, in this region at least, turned a pitying ear to the stricken and staggering country and refused the foothold of ice that would have enabled the enemy to cross the delta and encircle Roumania.

\* \* \* \*

To many people the beauties of the mountains, forests, lakes, and plains of different countries all bear more or less the same resemblance, though in differing degree. There are others, more sensitive perhaps, who sense the spirit of the people in the aspect of their land. Here in Roumania there is an indefinable something that marks it as distinct, a nobility mingled with a poetic simplicity and gentle melancholy, that is totally different from the harsher grandeur of Bulgaria, or the well advertised beauty of Switzerland, with its bourgeois materiality lying so close under the majestic peaks.

Few travellers have trodden this land or disturbed



THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 87 the bond of occult sympathy existing between the Roumanian peasant and his soil. One who knew the country profoundly has said that :

" It would seem as if the reflections of the sufferings and joys of the Roumanian people had coloured and shadowed the hills and plains, an echo of the trials and hopes of the race which has voiced its way through the woods and across the mountain peaks. The soil has impregnated the soul of the race with its perfume, while the race has stamped on nature the seal of originality of its soul. This originality clothes the landscape with a character of hidden poetry, gentle dreaming, and a tranquillity which makes the charm of this nature a very picturesque, richly varied and endearing one."<sup>1</sup>

Through the whole of Roumania there lingers still that deep close bond, a communion between the soil and the spirit of him who tills it, which is only found amongst those who have suffered, struggled and bled for their land. For them it is a voice that through all vicissitudes and trials speaks with a mute but unfailing understanding, giving them a consolation, a patience, a steadfastness, to support them in a life often hard and toilsome. Centuries of oppression, of wayward shifting rulers, have developed this instinctive love, deep devotion and trust in the eternal Mother who has ever been their hope, their life, their work.

It is a profound and subtle link, and one that amongst the peasants of the mountains, valleys and steppes has tinged their existence with a paganism, a paganism in many ways beautiful, the belief in the great spirits of

<sup>1</sup> *La terre et la race Roumaines*, A. Sturdza.

88 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY nature that surround them, and of which their customs, folk-lore and ballads show such convincing proof.

The nymphs of the pools and lake ; the dryads of the woods;

the *mama pădurii*, the gentle guardian of children wandering in the forests ; the little elves that dance by night; the silent watching deities of the mountain crests; the bounteous water spirit—a good and powerful spirit, to be constantly propitiated in a land often threatened with drought ; the evil water spirit that lurks in the depths of the wells and pools, and lures the maiden down by the witchery of his strange green eyes and the magnetism of his glance ! But above them all reigns Pan. The immortal, the great god Pan 1 With his fierce love of life and his singing soul, he is enshrined deeply in the heart and soul of the people !

Like Socrates they might say in their simple hearts, “ Beloved Pan, give me beauty in the inward soul, and may the outer and inner man be at one. May I count the wise man rich and may my store of gold be such as only the good can bear.”<sup>1</sup>

Listen all over the land and you will hear his pipes ; by river, and mead, and wood ! Hark and you will catch the rustle and movement of his strange half-animal body as he follows you, whispering and laughing amongst the sedges and streams, peeping with slanting eyes through the tangle of undergrowth and bracken . . . and his note “. . . Sweet, sweet, O Pan !

Piercing sweet by the river” permeates all their legendary lore from ancient time up to the present day.

Here in these poetic old-world lands he roams

<sup>1</sup> Phaedrus, 279.

THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 89 royally—beloved, serene. In the new world Pan’s pipes are never heard. He is alien there, unknown, unwanted. There is no dusky, dreamy comer in that bright new hustling sphere where he can cut a reed, to shape and tune it to a plaintive melody that will beguile the worker from his toil, pipe he never so sweetly. The pools and streams there are beautiful but never haunted — Africa and Asia know him not. . . . The Teuton has cast him out

; he is too subtle, too wildly sweet for their beer-drinking ruralities. But in the glades, the romantic woods of fair Italy and France, along the streams, the sunny slopes of Greece, the cool, leafy depths of wonderful England, where the deer seek the shade at noon, the wood pigeon murmurs, the wondrous voice of the nightingale pours forth its shower of silver melody to the starlight, and in the lonely pathetic beauty of Roumanian lands he pipes with his clear sweet note, and will pipe so long as there is left one little wood of enchantment or a tender heart to listen.

\* \* \* \*

And perhaps tenderness, patience, fortitude are some of the distinctive qualities that strike one as characteristics of the Roumanian peasantry. Theirs is a character in many ways complex. Psychologically they present the fundamental traits of their ancient origin, with the addition of superimposed influences, coloured and effected through centuries by the diverse elements and races that swept over the land. In outlining briefly those influences one must not forget the political circumstances that produced them, or that they were transfused only through struggle and warfare, and never through the channels of peace.



## 90 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

The Roumanian never knew peace or prosperity, and it needed the most heroic efforts to prevent his being engulfed during the long turmoil of the centuries. This has in consequence impressed his character very distinctly. The four principal elements that have affected this race are the Dacian, Latin, Slav and Greek. Others, such as the Hungarian, Turkish, Italian or Germanic, have been quite ephemeral.

The Roman occupation of the Carpatho-Balkan peninsula, which lasted 150 years, with its just military and civil organization, and excellent colonizing influence, stamped indefinably the Thrac-Illyrian peoples. The well-known historians Xenopol, Hășdeu and Jorga have demonstrated beyond doubt that, both from the point of view of the race and the language, the original Daco- Roman mixture produced the following groups: the Daco-Roman in the Carpathians, the Meso-Latin of Mcesia, or the Balkans, and the Armâni or Vlachs towards the Adriatic and Greek peninsula.

Of the very earliest, the Dacian strain, the Emperor Julian the Apostate reports that the great Emperor Trajan had said of the race, “ I have subjugated the Dacian, the most warlike of nations, existing, not only because of the strength of their bodies, but also by the teaching of their sage Zamolxis, so venerated by them. He inculcated that they were never called upon to die, but only to pass from one abode to another, and that is why they go more gaily towards death than on any other journey.” The Roman thus grafted on to the vigorous Dacian stock proved a strong foundation of union and sentiment, a conservation which proved of such resistance that it needed some centuries of warfare before the bar-





barians could settle on the lands once occupied by the Roman legions.

From this early Daco-Roman union the Latin civilization has been transmitted up to the present day on Carpatho-Danubian soil, and has bequeathed the qualities of resistance and tenacity, the marvellous instinct of conservatism, and the genius of national tradition which has saved the race from extinction and preserved, under an endless line of shifting rulers, of complex influences, the resilience and pertinacity of the national character.

One is tempted to ask what is the especial fibre in nations that conserves their racial individuality and strength ? Why is it that Greece, so splendid and powerful in the past, should show such poverty in creative faculty in modern times ?

She produces no warriors, poets, philosophers, sculptors as in former days. The same natural influences that once inspired them are there. Little has changed, except the mind of her people. Professor Xenopol has propounded the view that the infusion of the Slav blood was too much for the Hellenic temperament, which could stand no dilution, and so degenerated.

Other competent observers say that the Hellenic blood has practically disappeared. In some of the isles, notably Crete, parts of the Peloponnesus, in a few mountain districts it may still exist, but the majority of the modern Greek population, especially the Athenian, is mainly an immigrant strain.

Italy, on the contrary, who had received all her artistic inspiration from Greece in her Roman days, her poetry, painting, sculpture, and in some respects her architecture being but an *elargissement* of Greek art, and far less

92 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY naturally endowed than the Greeks, suddenly bloomed during the Renaissance into a wonderful period of rich and artistic fertility. Where the Romans were great was in their military, civil, judicial, colonizing and administrative power—the practical side of existence and its various activities. Here again the surroundings had not changed, yet in this case the admixture of other blood, of Germanic origin, had stimulated the mind as well as changed the physiologically material substratum of the people. But in this instance the admixture which had enfeebled the genius of the Greeks had, in the case of the more virile Romans, but unchained new forces.<sup>1</sup>

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Following on the Roman occupation of the Dacian lands the barbaric hordes of Huns and Goths, ancestors of the Boche of to-day, ravaged the country. These savages, as in present times, were endowed with an in-appeasable instinct for blood, conquest and ferocity. They passed like a hurricane of destruction over the land without in any way touching the ethnology of the people. Like mighty storms they swayed back and forth destroying, torturing, living by rapine, fire and the sword, but never getting at the heart or soul of the race. They only succeeded in driving the Daco-Romans off the fertile plains into the stern fastnesses of the mountain ranges, where they could struggle better to maintain their security and national traditions.

In the seventh century the Slavs forced by over-population and the necessity for expansion migrated into the land and settled there. They never conquered the Daco-Romans and were a peaceful and not a warlike race.

<sup>1</sup> *Les Roumaines*, Professor Xenopol.

THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 93 They were good agriculturists and after the terrors of the Hun and Avare

invasions could almost be considered as benefactors. Though the tendencies of the Slav and Daco-Roman character were diametrically opposed to each other, yet their mutual desire for peace drew them together politically and socially.

The Slav blood, dreamy, unpractical, somewhat neurotic—and often rather a debilitating influence— intermingled with that of these early Roumanians between the seventh and eleventh centuries. Though the sturdy warlike qualities of their Daco-Roman ancestors enabled them to counteract its lethargic influence, still it manifested itself in some minor points, and without taking away from their sound native qualities, it may be said to have coloured their natures. A certain indolence, a sense of tolerance, of pity, a patience, a strain of melancholy and a fatalism might have become weakness, had it not been balanced by the natural and indomitable persistence of the earlier strain. Many Slav words are found in their tongue, but beyond this their influence was only partial.

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The Greek influence, which lasted about three centuries, was of far greater value than the Slav. In briefly noting the former's effect on the national character one must remember that there were four various sorts or phases of Greeks—the Hellenic, the Byzantine, the Phanariot and the Greek of to-day. The first, famous for its world-reaching intellectual influence, splendour of art and eloquence, its moral, physical and mental equilibrium, the “eurythemie” as Plato has called it, and all that the world owes to this splendid period in the past,



was introduced by the Roman colonizers into ancient Dacia, and the Roumanian of to-day looks back with pride to this first faint yet subtle impress on their civilization.

The second the Byzantine left its mark on some of the social institutions and customs of the country. This extraordinary period of. culture, intellectuality, civilization and art; of pomp and a magnificence that the world has ever seen; of a great religion in which credulity and mysticism warred with the instincts of duplicity, perfidy, crime ; of a lust of blood and violence such as has rarely moved the soul in the annals of history! " Each of these multiple faces of the Byzantine Sphinx has become a powerful and typical characteristic, and each plays its part in forming the most singular of psychological enigmas. This multiplicity of the most important factors of Byzantine civilization has puzzled the historian ; consequently the evil elements have appeared to predominate over the good and in the eyes of the Western mind, ill-informed, prejudiced or simply horrified, Byzantium appeared as the atrocious image of an undeveloped empire, the sink of the world, and receptacle of all the crimes. To-day we no longer believe these exaggerations. Historians of repute have exhumed from the dust of the past the true Byzantium, and have done justice to its errors by showing Byzantium as a city of contrasts, where all the civilizations of antiquity have met and been transformed.”<sup>1</sup>

Its influence can be traced on the language, costumes and traditions of the Orthodox Church, on the trend of political judicial life and thought among the Princes and *boyars* up to the last century, and the practice of

<sup>1</sup> Alexandre Sturdza, La *Terre et la Race Roumaine*. magic and superstitious rites amongst the peasantry. Among the psychological effects are to be noted a diplomatic facility, political intrigue, intellectual curiosity, courtesy and the

insidious taint of bribery so prevalent in Eastern Europe (with its facsimile in the Boloism of Western nations), but in Roumania far less marked than in the neighbouring countries of Russia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Austria.

Thirdly comes the Greek which can be subdivided, first the Phanariot, a successor to the Byzantine influence, which notwithstanding their mutual psychological heritage differed from them in many ways, and secondly the " Grecoteiul," as they are called in Roumania, a bitter and scathing term for a class so different from the Hellenic, Byzantine and Phanariot that it is difficult to believe that it is even a variety of the same type, a type very degenerate and degraded by the intermixture of Semitic and Oriental blood. This race, which settled in the Roumanian principalities in the seventeenth century, some historians have unjustly and foolishly mistaken for the Phanariots.

Though the Phanariots had their faults and some their vices, yet they were entirely different from this " intriguing brood of locusts, who were a species of grasping restless oligarchy, a rabble of uncultivated envious upstarts gaining influence through the back door; low, servile, cringing; hard, insolent, rapacious and untruthful." They have been characterized by Count Kissileff in a celebrated phrase as " the most turbulent and petty intriguers of all bearded men who swarm beneath the canopy of heaven."

The Phanariot influence was by far the most penetrating





96 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY of all the influences which coloured the national character. Notwithstanding the luxury and corruption of their political lives, the oppression and taxation under which the people groaned, it cannot be denied that these princes were the first really “ active agents ” in promoting civilization and culture, and to them is due the sympathetic encouragement of the luminous thoughts and ideas of France.

Since the reign of Louis XIV the language of diplomacy has been French. The Turks, indolent and retrograde, would not learn it, and it was the wealthy Greeks of the Phanar or Lighthouse who, living in sumptuous state and luxury which made their palaces a veritable replica of the Byzantine courts, and desirous for power, saw their way to achieve it by means of their natural facility for languages by becoming interpreters to the Divan. The highest post they aspired to was that of Grand Dragoman, who was the most influential minister of the Ottoman Government, and the great ambition of these Phanariot families was this very lucrative and distinguished position, which brought them into close touch with the Ambassadors of the foreign powers. In order to obtain it they endeavoured to outrival each other in the study and practice of French, summoning at great expense, secretaries and tutors from France, who introduced to them all the customs and ideas of their country.

These Phanariot Greeks who bought the thrones of Wallachia and Moldavia from the Porte thus brought the language and culture of France to the principalities, and apart from the original Latin strain in the Roumanian race it was through them that the French influence took root in the country. Secretaries, valets, chefs, professors



and doctors were engaged by the Hospodars, and French refugees from Russia flocked to the luxurious courts of these princes. French books began to be read, and the less rich *boyars* who could not engage the French teachers got Greek or Italian masters to teach them French. Voltaire was so much read by the young men that the Patriarch in Constantinople issued a mandate menacing those who read his works with the wrath of heaven; while in 1801, a Paris paper the *Spectateur du Nord* writes that "while France is becoming barbarian there are barbarian countries that are becoming French."

During the reign of Michel Soutzo in 1823 this influence increased greatly, penetrating the Oriental character hitherto prevailing. The daughters of the *boyars* who aspired at possessing any mind or education spoke and read it and all sorts of *jeux d'esprit* were played in society.

A traveller, Kosmali, who was in the country at this time, relates that "If a life of ease can be considered as a happy existence, without doubt the ladies of the Moldavian nobility play this beatific role to perfection, for most of their occupation consists of turning the pages of a French novel or romance. Finding myself one day in the house of a *boyar* that I visited I saw on a table an open book. It was *Corinne* by Madame de Stael. I turned the pages while waiting for the mistress of the house, and noticed on the margin several pencil notes in Greek. I also noticed that the dear Oswald, the hero, found little grace in the eyes of the reader, who never lost an opportunity whenever he appeared of addressing him with the not too flattering epithets of 'animal,' 'donkey' and other courtesies of the same order I When Oswald in answer

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to the Prince of Castelforte, who reproached him on his behaviour to *Corinne*, says, 'You really find me in error, Prince,' the indignant reader finally launched out at the head of

the unfortunate Oswald the energetic epithet of ‘ homed ass ’ ! The lady entering at that moment and finding me smiling, we started a very interesting conversation on *Corinne* and love in general, until suddenly her husband in company with another *boyar* entered the room ; our conversation came to an abrupt conclusion, for the men of Moldavia find it beneath their dignity to listen to the opinions of their womenkind. Taking off their yellow slippers they seated themselves *à la Turque* on the divan, ordering coffee and the *Tschibouka* to be served.”

The Phanariot gift for languages, their energy, political dexterity and oratorical powers left a very distinct impress on the nobility of Roumania, among whom they intermarried, and the French influence, though dating from comparatively recent times, is the most important, as it implies the affinity of the race and the psychological tendency of the Latin blood. Imported by these Greek Phanariot rulers, it has effected more deliberately the culture and the intelligence of the nation than its habits, and its influence on the upper and middle classes is very evident and constantly increasing. More than one distinguished family of modern Roumania traces its origin to these rulers.

Thus the French language so harmonious and rich in idea, so capable of expressing the *nuance* of sentiment, penetrated the thought and mind of the upper and middle classes with an irresistible power. It became the organ of expression and thought for all the governing and directing classes as well as that of society. French books and reviews circulated among the ranks of those who aspired to culture of thought and mind, indeed so much did it become the language that hardly any books were translated into French, for every one spoke it. The sons and daughters of the aristocracy were sent at an early age to be educated in France and often forgot their native tongue. Not only in the language but in the customs and manners ;

furnishing, decoration and art; the women's dress and general taste, all were fashioned on the French model. The laws and judicial code were copied on French lines—in a word, everything was modelled as faithfully as possible on the French civilization.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, this influence upon the peasantry has not been so marked, and beyond the sympathy and natural affinity between the two Latin races the peasant still remains in paramount possession of the habits and customs that have come down to him from early Roman days.

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A very interesting section of the Roumanian race, the Wallachs, Coutzo-Vlachs or Armâni as they are called in their own tongue, are the only nomads to be found in Balkan Europe if we except the gipsy. Their name is a synonym for shepherd, and they are a distinctly pastoral people. They number about 450,000, and are to be found in the Findus in Thessaly—which by reason of their numbers has acquired the name of Great Wallachia—at Tricala, Larissa and Ellassona ; in Acamania (Little Wallachia), in Albania, near Antivari, Dulcigno Ebassân and in Macedonia. About ten years ago, as a result of representations from Roumania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia were made to guarantee educational <sup>1</sup> Professor Xenopol, *Les Roumaines*.



100 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY and religious freedom for the Vlachs resident in their lands.

Lenormant, a French writer, has compared them to the shepherds of Homeric days. He found them in Attica around the slopes of Daphne, and calls them " The Wallachian or Roumanian race," and in describing them says, " Wandering is not a necessity that the Vlach has had to submit to by force : it is an absolute requirement of his nature and his life. Detached from the soil where other men are rooted, one could almost think he had imbibed some of the instinct of his herd which sent him migrating at certain seasons."

One of the most remarkable features of this interesting people, indeed of all the Roumanian race, is the unity of their psychology. In all the countries through which this section of the race, these exiled and nomadic Wallachians, wander, they speak the same tongue, have the same manners and customs, songs, dances, music, legends and superstitions as the parent stock. As distinct from other Latin races, these people, ranging over approximately 300,000 square kilometres, speak an idiom that is identical, whereas in Spain, France, Italy, Belgium, the dialects differ greatly according to the provinces. The long years of oppression they endured, their pastoral life which drew them together at regular seasons of the year for their national celebrations and ancient customs, was a force which united them and held them together in an effort to escape extinction and absorption.

The wandering spirit is extraordinarily pronounced in them. Among the richer classes it shows itself as merchants travelling to Italy, Austria and even as far as Spain, and even when well to do they continue to do this



■SHEPHERD BOY IN THE SUMMER PASTURES.



A PROUD MOMENT.





**NOON : BEAUTIFUL DRAUGHT OXEN IN THE MARKET-PLACE.**



**PEACE BABIES—BUT ALL BOYS.**

**THE HEART OF ROUMANIA** 101 until old age overtakes them. The poorer ones follow the life of commercial travellers and pedlars, but by far the largest number of these

Wallachians or Coutzo- Vlachs are pastoral with a passion for freedom, and their life is spent in their tents in the highlands in summer, or in their camps in the lower lands in winter.

Their social organization is of a very feudal and patriarchal character—twenty to thirty families form a little community, a group called a *stâna* or sheep-fold, under the headship of an hereditary chief who governs his little clan. The patriarch or *Tchelnic*, as he is called, is quite an autocrat and orders all the affairs of his tribe —the younger men must wait on him and his guests and his word is law to all.

At Easter-tide they take their flocks of lambs to the markets and fairs in the towns, where they are sold in thousands. This done they break up their winter quarters and trek in a great stream, goats, sheep, donkeys, mules ; carts carrying the tents, women and children ; the men with their guns and clad in great shaggy sheep-skin coats, *cape*, the fierce yelping Molossian dogs bounding and barking on every side, to the summer pastures. The men with their herds and dogs generally go up alone to the higher slopes, where they live in little huts made of branches and brushwood.

The larger number of them stay in the hills until after the Feast of the Apostles, and in September at the Feast of the Madonna they descend into the plains according to their ancient custom, the shepherds of the higher slopes alone staying there until November gloom and cold brings them and their flocks also down to the lower lands. Hospitality and thrift are marked characteristics 102 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TODAY of these Wallachs ; peaceful and unaggressive, they are a people of just and equable temperament with a deep romantic devotion to their race, its customs and the open free life of nature.

\* \* \* \*

Two other classes must be included in this very brief

summary of the Roumanian race. These are the gipsies and the Jews, two races who live on Roumanian soil but are alien to the land. The Tsigan, these mysterious children of the East, nomads from far distant Persia and Hindustan, penetrated into the country so long ago that no authentic information on this point can be obtained. They brought with them all the occult knowledge, the rites, the customs and handicrafts, which as dancers, musicians, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, weavers of spells, brewers of potions and love philters, as masons, horse doctors, tinkers of brass and copper work, have given them a place—though a shifting and degraded one— through all the lands of Europe.

It is, however, principally as musicians that they excel, and the musical profession is almost a monopoly in their hands. Their music is a wild, plaintive, erotic one, passionate and deeply stirring, with a strain of savage despair, a restless ardour, alternating with a languor, a strange brooding melancholy, exciting and unrestful, that seems to hold some ancient secret, primitive, guarded, inscrutable.

As they wander westwards they lose this precious inborn gift. The cold grey skies, the harsher reserve of the northern temperament seem to affect them vaguely, stifling their joyous song and dance, hampering the savage vitality of their stringed accord. But in these Balkan

THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 103 lands, in Hungary, Russia, Turkey they retain the full command and witchery of their wild instinctive music and magic.

Though they are called in by the peasants on all occasions to celebrate with their music at births, marriages and deaths ; for charms against the evil eye or the terrible vampires so profoundly believed in ; by the rich for the stringed music which accompanies all their parties ; they are yet looked upon as a despised race ; a caste, the slavery and bonds of which have only

been released within recent years, and who take little part in the national life.

The Roumanian gipsy is the handsomest of them all. In olden times they used to be bought and sold with the estates, but in 1855 they obtained their freedom. They are liable for military service, which they often evade by means of their wandering habits, and they are taxed. This yearly tax used to be paid by sifting the gold dust washed down from the mountains by the rivers Arges and Dimbovitza. They are of medium height, swarthy, slender, but of a physical strength quite extraordinary, especially amongst the male gipsies of the towns, who as *hammals* or porters lift incredibly heavy weights. In disposition they are untruthful, cunning and somewhat cowardly—a gay, inconsequent nature, yet subject to moods of jealousy and quick flares of fury. Bound by no conventions they may profess the religion of the country, but they practise none beyond their own primitive worship of nature and its mysterious rites. Naked, predatory, content, their wants are few and are often supplied by pilfering from the nearest farmyard.

With their prolific families and savage dogs they live in tumble-down huts and dugouts on the outskirts of the villages and towns, or in the picturesque encampments of the more prosperous nomadic tribes. Ragged and unkempt, extraordinarily picturesque in their gaudy rags, with their flashing, heavily fringed eyes, white teeth, their graceful limbs and brilliant smiles they fear neither God nor man, cold nor heat. The freedom for their wild, untrammelled lives, the warmth of the sun, the cool sweet breath of the wind, something to eat—be it mine or thine—liberty and love—is all these dusky vagrants of nature demand of life.

\* \* \* \*

The Jewish immigration into Roumania is of comparatively recent date, and we only hear of them there in the seventeenth

century. Their numbers were small then and were not augmented until the Phanariot period. In 1803 they only numbered 10,000, and their pretension as to being old inhabitants of the country is therefore without foundation. Overflowing from Russia and Galicia, two reasons induced them to emigrate, the desire to evade military service in Russia and the knowledge that as strangers in Roumania they might invoke the protection of the Consols of the foreign powers in evading the payment of taxes. For by virtue of old treaties with Turkey the nobility and strangers in Roumania were exempt from taxation.

The Jews, who are ethnographically intruders in Roumania, were not allowed to acquire land unless they, like other strangers, were naturalized ; this legislative precaution existed also in other lands, such as England, Holland, etc., in order to prevent the Jew obtaining a stranglehold on the simple peasantry.

#### THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 105

A very large proportion of these Jews were only Israelite in name and were not of Semitic blood but of Mongol-Tartar strain, of Mosaic belief, and as the celebrated Russian statesmen Prince Gortchakoff said at the Congress of Berlin, at a moment when he was animated with nothing but the kindest sentiments for Roumania, “ His Serene Highness must not confound the Jews of London, Paris, Berlin or Vienna, to whom one could assuredly never refuse any civil or political rights, with the Jews of Serbia, Roumania and those of some of the Russian provinces, who are a veritable scourge for the indigenous population.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, another authority declares that there is a vast difference between the so-called Jew of Roumania and the Israelite of other countries. The former has none of the Hebraic or Semitic type ; they are descendants of the Mosaic Khazare

hordes who in the eleventh century were attacked by Sviatoslav and crushed by the Slav forces. The true Israelite of Western Semitic race has nothing in common with them but religion, and this has never been considered by anyone as a criterion of race ; besides the Jews of Galicia, of Russia and Roumania, even from the religious point of view, distinguish themselves from the Israelites of the race of Levi, from the Talmudists, or the Israelites, adepts of the Kabbale, or the esoteric traditions. Some few indeed of those exist in Roumania ; and one can pick them out by their Semitic type—an interesting one—their customs and their names. It seems thus very strange on the part of the Jews of the West to show such a curious interest and sympathy in the flotsam and jetsam of the mosaical Khazares of the yellow race.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Congress of Berlin, *Protocol No. 8*, 28th June, 1878.

■ A. Sturdza, *La Terre et la Race Roumaine*.

Here they number nearly 400,000 as against 7,000,000 of the indigenous population, whereas in France they are only 80,000 against 40,000,000 inhabitants. The Jews increase more rapidly than any people except the Armenians. They congregate in the larger towns, and though in Northern Moldavia there are a few purely Jewish villages and colonies reminding one of Poland, yet in some of the towns they have increased so rapidly that they are in the majority. The Moldavian Jews are as different from the French of Jewish faith as the “ Haitian Catholics or the Maronite Catholics in Syria ” are to the Catholics of France or Italy. In Bucharest and the southern part of Roumania one finds a considerable number of Spanish Jews of the real Semitic race who have wandered up from Salonika, their great centre, and who are much superior to this other class.

With regard to a certain feeling of distrust and suspicion that exists between them and the Roumanians, this is not due to the question of their religion, but because wherever they settle they try to undercut the peasants or workers and oust them from their

natural occupations. A very large proportion of them by birth as well as by will, customs, mind and language are strangers to the country they live in. They will not send their children to the national schools and insist on retaining their German- Yiddish jargon, and finally, as a well-known writer has said, “ they will not serve or be taught, cultivate or pay ; they participate in no effort, make no sacrifices and do not even submit to the orders of the police, to the rules of hygiene, and will wield neither the plough, pickaxe nor the rifle.”

The greater proportion of these Roumanian Jews are

THE HEART OF ROUMANIA 107 not like those living in Austria, France, England, who speak the language of the country they live in, and show a practical or benevolent interest in the land that is sheltering them and giving them a living. If they were like those of other countries, identifying themselves with the national interests, language, etc., the Roumanians would not feel so sore ; but they show no sympathy or understanding beyond that of their own material gain, and in recent years as an economic advance-guard of German influence ; and that is why Roumania endeavours to keep her Latin life free from their infiltration.

It is a pregnant question and one which in the past has been greatly aggravated by faults on both sides. But a spirit of reconciliation, a sense of justice has of late years contributed very largely to smooth these matters over and to give some prospect of an early solution of the problem, and citizenship with its attendant rights is already well assured for these peoples.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY

To attempt to dominate the East, forms the keystone of German Welt-politik.—*G. W. Proihero.*

ONE of the oldest of the problems that have confronted the chancelleries of Europe is the Eastern Question. It has been regarded as a chronic malady, a necessary evil to be borne with patience. No one has had sufficient courage or diplomatic skill to try and cure, or improve the position ; with the result that these unhappy Balkan states—the whirlpool of every intrigue and covetous instinct of the greater nations—have ever been at the mercy of the quack charlatan and adventurer of neighbouring predatory powers, seeking only their own advantage.

One writer has said that the “ Near Eastern Question may be defined as the problem of filling up the vacuum created by the gradual disappearance of the Turkish Empire in Europe.”<sup>1</sup>

This but embraces one small point of view. True, the conquest and disappearance of that “ presence embedded in the living flesh of Europe of an alien substance—the Ottoman Turk,” has permitted these countries, Roumania, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria to escape from the Turkish whirlpool that for centuries had sucked them under. But their size, added to the vigorous, national spirit <sup>1</sup> Dr. Miller.

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THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 109 which converted them into thriving States so quickly, attracted the



envy of the Central Powers—a coalition more than the equal of the Turk in *esprit de rapine*, cruelty and sinister *diableries*.

Little has been known of Roumania's attitude towards the other Balkan states by the general public ; less indeed of the country itself; but her entry into the war on the side of the Entente has inevitably stimulated interest in this beautiful land. The fact that one of the loveliest of our English princesses is her Queen, and that historically and commercially she is an Ally whom we welcome with pride, is universally recognized to-day.

To realize clearly her position and to understand the reasons for her intervention it is necessary to cast one's eyes over the later years, leading up to her decision in favour of the Allied cause.

The first seeds of Prussian influence in Roumania were sown in 1866, when a German, Prince Charles or Carol of Hohenzollem, was elected to the throne.

It was perhaps only natural that after the appropriation of the Roumanian province of Bessarabia by Russia in 1878—a mean and ungrateful return for the successful aid the small state lent the great nation at Plevna—a deep feeling of resentment was left among the Roumanian people, stifling cordiality or goodwill between the two countries.

France, notwithstanding racial traits, and the natural bonds of sympathy between her and Roumania, was bleeding from her defeat in 1870, and could give little promise of anything in the way of practical support in the working out of Roumania's national destiny. England, indifferent and remote, rendered the eagerly proffered no ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY friendship of Germany the easiest solution of the problem. To Prince Carol, impressed with the power and development of the land of his birth, the scheme was particularly acceptable. At first unpopular, and received with suspicion by Roumanians, this German *rapprochement* was

approved later, and under its influence the country made such progress that Roumanian statesmen, gradually becoming more responsive, were willing to accept Germany's exuberant offers of help and loans for the further development of the country.

Complete reorganization of the army was one of the first matters to which Prince Carol devoted his attention. German officers were invited as instructors, German engineers and contractors invaded the country, without opposition, for the building of necessary railways and bridges. With the usual Teutonic intensity Germano- Jewish financiers busied themselves over the budding prospects of the land.

To Roumanian statesmen the country lay between the devil and the deep sea ; represented by the Central Powers and Russia. Unfortunately, the devil was their choice, for as usual his bribes were manifold, his energy immense.

In 1883 the *rapprochement* became an alliance, though not a publicly acknowledged one, due perhaps to a desire on the part of the Prince not to offend Roumanian popular sentiment, which, with the exception of a few politicians, was persistently Latin.

Historical as well as racial affinity inclined Roumania to the Latin Powers, and not the Teuton. Rome was indeed the ancient mother of the race ; but it is to the elder sister, France, that Roumania, "un îlot latin au

THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY in milieu de l'ocean slave et finnois qui l'environne," looks with love and devotion, and France returns the affection. And the Western nation is proud of this little sister—a distant outpost of the same great civilization and culture —standing at the frontier of the East—not the wonderful and ancient East of India with its long history and deep wisdom—but the East of the barbarian, the Turk, the Kurd, and the Bulgar.

But Prince Carol, working conscientiously and with shrewd tenacity for what he considered the best interests of his adopted

land, encouraged German enterprise and influence. Imperceptibly at first, but very surely, the essence of Prussianism permeated all the various channels of national Roumanian life ; thus one more link was forged in the *Drang nach Osten* policy of Berlin.

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On the outbreak of the first Balkan War, in 1912, Roumania stood aloof. Taking no part, she watched, however, necessarily interested in maintaining the Balkan equilibrium, and with an eye on the sinister Bulgarian schemes and ambitions. It was not until the Judas of the Slav race, Bulgaria—that jackal of the Teuton and the Turk—treacherously turned upon her Allies, that Roumania intervened. Knowing what a cat's-paw Germany possessed in the personality of the vicious and unscrupulous ruler of Bulgaria, Ferdinand the Fox, the little State realized how resolutely—and successfully— Berlin was intriguing to bring the Moslem world under her heel, staking all on domination in the Balkans and a Mittel-Europa policy.

Roumania determined to cast her influence on the side of the small nations, fighting for their independence ; and siding with Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, she declared war on Bulgaria. This was not done as an excuse for increasing her territory, for she only accepted the rectification of her strategical frontier in Dobrudja, the barren and sandy belt south of the Danube Delta. She recognized that if she failed to support Serbia and Greece, and they were defeated by Bulgaria, Germany with her claws deeply imbedded in Roumanian vitals, with the control of the greater part of her industries and finance, would become omnipotent in the Balkans, with a clear road from Berlin to Bagdad — a perpetual menace to peace and the development of the small nations that lay in the path of the Juggernaut.

In his endeavour to bind the Sultan by ties of gratitude to Germany, the Kaiser had spared no pains, nor left untried any

wiles of bribery or flattery which might serve this end. Even the terrible massacres of the Christian Armenians did not stem the generous flow of his esteem, and the very moment when the world was voicing its horror and condemnation was chosen by the All Highest to accentuate his friendship for Turkey and demonstrate his admiration for this nation of assassins.

When Abdul Hamid was dethroned, the Kaiser merely shifted the object of his attentions, and continued to shower his favours and advice upon the ambitious upstart leader of the Young Turk party, Enver Bey, he who so ruthlessly “removed” older and truer patriots from his tortuous “German-made” path. In Enver Bey, Berlin discovered the perfect tool to shape the Kaiser's projects ; while the Turkish capital provided the most fertile ground for the cultivation of an infamous Austro-German system of intrigue, bribery and massacre. On

THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 113 this poisonous diet the Turkish nation was fed and cunningly encouraged to continue their diabolical policy. But it was a policy. And a French writer has very truly remarked: “*La politique utilitaire d’Allemagne, si odieuse soit elle au sentiment Europeen, est au moins une politique ; elle gagne à l’Empereur Guillaume les sympathies du monde Mussulman, ouvre les voies au commerce et impose un certain respect. . . . L’Orient ne respecte que la force.*”<sup>1</sup>

Austria meanwhile seconded her neighbour's efforts to the fullest extent by the development of her own schemes of conquest. The Serb provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been audaciously annexed, and Franz Joseph, the absolute monarch of a Hapsburg autocracy of the most pronounced type, dreamed the same grandiose dreams of glory as Germany. But to pursue his schemes of spoliation he needed the powerful backing of his Ally. Alone he could not do it ; for, as Take Jonescu very truly observes of the Dual Monarchy, she is “ a fossil in the modern world ; a state, without being a nation—

## ii2 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

only a dynasty, a government and an army. There are many nations within the Hapsburg Empire. *The only one not to be found there is the Austrian nation*, for it does not exist. If a railway accident were to kill off all the members of the Hapsburg family, Austria would automatically cease to exist. Being nothing but a government and an army, she can contemplate any kind of conquest with a freedom of mind impossible for other states, which are nations as well.”<sup>2</sup>

This anachronism the Austrian Empire is very Asiatic in type, the Emperor as a Sultan being the patriarchal

<sup>1</sup> Gaulis.

’ *Origins of the War*,

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and extremely arbitrary chief of a very stiff archaic and unprogressive group of people who circle like satellites around his person. A dynasty or family and a government composed of archdukes and archduchesses with a very limited addition of a few families of courtiers, adventurers and aristocrats of the most exclusively conservative and mentally inert type.

But the unwieldiness of his Empire, the bitter clash of alien races forcibly held under his rule, their unrest and discontent did not discourage Franz Joseph from dreaming of further conquest, supported always by the might of Germany. Austria “clutched the hair of diverse populations and having clutched kept tugging there.”

Franz Joseph aimed at incorporating Roumania, Serbia and Bulgaria with the Austrian Empire on the footing of Federal States ; and his secret agent, M. Riedl, was sent to Bucharest in 1912 to spy out the land accordingly. Take Jonescu relates how this secret-service agent divided “the states of Europe into three groups : the Pirate States, i.e. France and England, who must be driven out of the continental markets ; the Asiatic State of Russia, whose frontiers must be set back beyond Moscow ; and the rest of the States, all of which, including Switzerland and Italy, were to enter the Customs union with Austria and

Germany.” A modest and pacific scheme indeed !

Austria’s ambitious design to secure access to the ^Egean was apparent to all. The Kaiser, nursing since 1890 his Berlin-to-Basra-and-Beyond designs, never rested. The vigour of the Balkan League, and the great growth of the national spirit of these States, as well as the fine fighting qualities, so successfully displayed by

THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 115 them, was a serious drawback to Prussian plans. But vast ambitions were at stake, and every effort was made by the Central Powers on the conclusion of the Balkan War to *prevent a satisfactory settlement*, for this would have seriously thwarted all their schemes.

Serbia blocked Germany’s road to the East as well as Austria’s access to the ^Egean Seas, and the award of Salonica to Greece was a severe blow to the Central Powers who had coveted this great harbour above all. It was a prize indeed for Greece. In population far exceeding Sofia and Belgrade, and in Greece itself second only to Athens, it is also by far the largest port in these regions, and carries the lion’s share of shipping in the Balkans.

The Central Powers, feverishly anxious to extend their own sea-board at the expense of the smaller states, made frantic efforts to prevent Serbia being awarded a port on the Adriatic which she had so justly deserved, and in this they were successful. The further outcome of German tactics resulted in Bulgaria being effectually estranged ; a German vassal nominally ruled as Sultan at Constantinople, while a German Queen and pro-German King governed despotically at Athens. Could anything have been more satisfactory to the enemies of European freedom ?

*Germany’s Mittel-Europa policy was what she went to war for.* It was a careful and systematically organized plan of

## ii2 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

robbery prepared during the years of peace hypocrisy by the Kaiser and the Military Autocrats who govern his Empire. History will in all probability be able to demonstrate by circumstantial evidence that the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was deliberately

n6 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY planned in order to facilitate this scheme and to provoke a quarrel with Serbia who blocked the Germano-Austrian way to the East. *The 'policy was a vast scheme of aggressive intent io divide Europe in two.* Germany's vassals, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, with the forced addition of Roumania, Serbia and Greece, were to be under her control from the Baltic tb the 2Egean and from Berlin to the Bosphorus and the Persian Gulf. All were to be served and maintained by her Berlin to Bagdad line.

This policy Haldane Macfall says was “ strategic in its object, it would give her a solid Central Europe as a magnificent jumping-off ground, off which to leap to the great adventure. It split the world apart and Germany was on the wedge. . . . Roumania and Serbia alone barred the way, but the gate of Serbia must at any rate at all costs be smashed in and a Pan-German empire would be complete. Roumania could be swallowed as Holland could be swallowed when required.”<sup>1</sup>

The Pan-German plan was also intended to baulk her enemies' defence by isolating Russia and Roumania, rendering it difficult for their Allies to assist or co-operate with them, and thus make them of little use as Allies.

Part of this ambitious and predatory plan included the building of a ship canal to link up the North Sea rivers with the Danube. By this means she would be able to transfer destroyers, submarines, light cruisers, aeroplanes and munitions by an alternative and less expensive route than the railway, from the North Sea to the Black Sea, and thus securely transport all the war material she needed by an unassailable overland route,

THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 117 while England could only do so through the submarine-infested Mediterranean. With a big naval base behind the Dardanelles she would also be a constant menace to us in the Eastern Mediterranean and to our possessions in Egypt and the Soudan, India and beyond. As Hans Delbruck has said : “ The main ganglion of the British Empire is Egypt and the Suez Canal. If Turkey comes out of the war a strong state and provides itself with railways, England can never go on holding Egypt with six thousand European soldiers, and if England loses the Canal all the bands connecting the Empire are loosened.”

It wants little imagination to realize the extreme danger of this scheme in the hands of a relentless, audacious and unscrupulous Empire like Germany, acutely covetous and jealous of Britain's power, or the ominous peril thus threatened her. Egypt in German occupation—and this would be the first prize aimed at—would be the deathknell of the whole British Empire.

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The general lack of intelligent interest on the part of the British public in foreign affairs was doubly accentuated in the case of the Balkan question. From the comfortable recesses of Western arm-chairs, the Balkans were ignorantly regarded as being bound up with the political destiny of semi-savage races. Entirely oblivious of the fact that these “ semi-savage ” states had a most direct bearing on Britain's tenure of her Eastern Empire, these vital pages of history had practically no interest for the average Briton. Safe by his own fireside, John Bull—*en bloc*—overlooked the essential fact that the Balkan States collectively form a most important part in the great overland route to England's possessions in India



u8 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY and beyond, and that Serbia was the “ guardian of the gate ” in the East, just as Belgium is in the West.

Serbia was not a mere excuse for the war, she was the *principal pivot of it, and with the fall of Serbia Germany achieved her purpose, her Pan-German map*. Great Britain has been indifferent and neglectful of Balkan questions, with the consequence that the Central Powers have only-too eagerly picked up the golden chances so readily relinquished, and joyously profiting by the lethargy of those who guided England’s foreign policy, the Austro-German forces established themselves firmly in the political, financial and industrial life of the Balkan Peninsula.

Our statesmen, Foreign Office and diplomatists have displayed such ignorance and ineptitude coupled with inexcusable blindness that Bulgaria and Turkey were able to successfully befool them, while Greece showed to what depths of treachery and intrigue a suborned royalty could go, without opening their eyes to the fact that for Britain *Serbia and in a lesser degree Roumania meant a mighty bulwark to her destiny*.

For Roumania’s intervention in the Balkan War we owe her a big debt : such luck for us was far greater than our diplomatists deserved. The little State, so casually, so ignorantly regarded by many ignorant insular Britishers as semi-barbaric, was able in conjunction with her Allies to stave off, for a while at least, Germany’s triumphant progress eastwards.

Had this check not been placed on Teutonic activities, our task in the present great war would have been immeasurably increased, if not rendered insurmountable. Apart from this, one other noteworthy result was obtained

THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 119 by this intervention. In linking herself with her Allies Roumania definitely and deliberately broke away from German influence,

and ruptured the agreement by which the Central Powers had striven to hold her bound and captive since 1883.

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On the map of Europe Roumania's position is a curious and interesting one. Her policy in the past has been largely influenced by it, and her hopes for a peaceful, fully-developed future depend greatly upon its reconstruction on purely national lines. On this depends her success in the years to come, provided that she can obtain from her jealous and envious neighbours a strategical frontier more closely corresponding with her natural racial boundaries.

The Roumanian kingdom of to-day consists of the ancient principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia with the Dobrudja. She is a distant outpost of Western culture on the edge of the barbarian fringe, and is the bridge between the Eastern and Western civilizations of Europe.

In the fifteenth century Roumania was square in shape, consisting of the aforementioned principalities with the addition of Bessarabia, Transylvania and the Bukovina. Present-day Roumania, owing to incursions by neighbouring powers, has been deprived of these last three, and now consists only of Moldavia, Wallachia and the Dobrudja.

The geographical outline of the kingdom as it exists to-day is that of a boot in shape. The foot portion contains the rich oil regions and great grain-producing district of Wallachia with its progressive and charming capital, Bucharest. The northern or ankle portion of the

120 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY boot being Moldavia, a bleaker, barer land, with the old capital, Jassy, near the Russian frontier.

The southern frontier is bounded by the Dobrudja and the Danube, stretching a distance of 250 miles, and dividing Roumania from Bulgaria. The Dobrudja under Roumanian rule

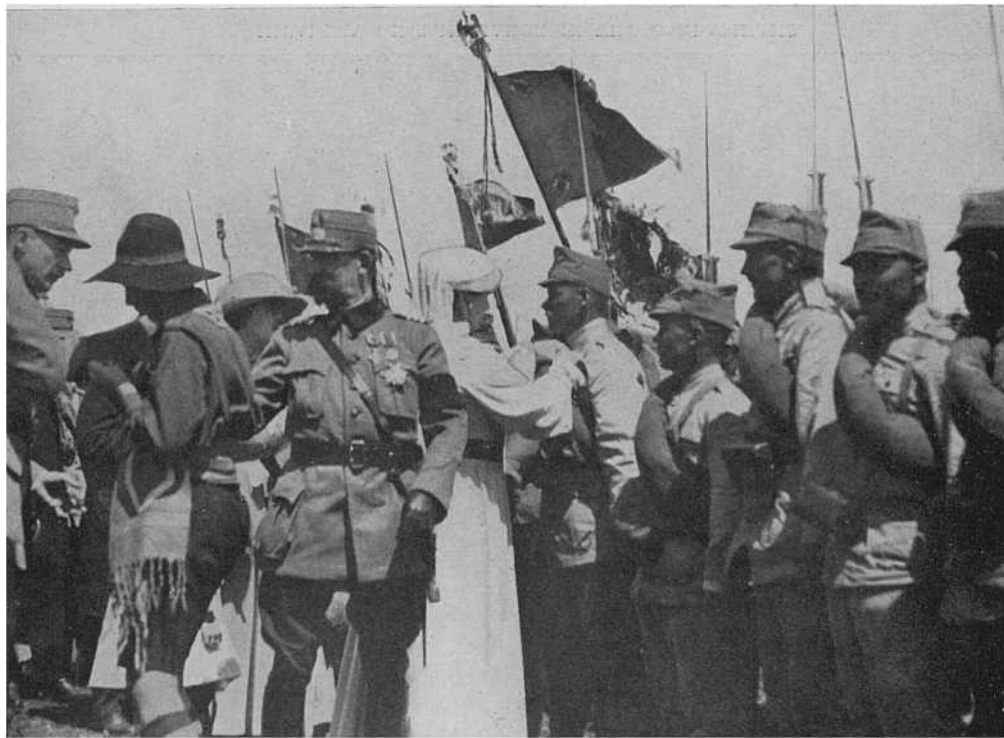
has made vast progress; roads, railways, the Carol Bridge, the transformation of Constanza into a great port, a just treatment of the Turk and Bulgar population have made “ this corner of Asia a pearl of Europe.”

Russia, with Roumania’s ancient province Bessarabia, lies to the north, the river Pruth dividing them ; east, the Black Sea—  
" l’Ocean Slav ”—laps her shores ; while to the west, facing the predatory Central Powers, the Carpathian Alps stretch for 370 miles, dividing her from those lost provinces, Transylvania and the Bukovina. If these were added to the kingdom the general conformation of the country would resemble a square, with an increase of three hundred miles to its territory.

Austria filched these provinces in 1867, and this theft, lies as deep and rankling a wound in the nation’s heart as Alsace and Lorraine are to France. Could she redeem these lands—the loved and lost, the most cherished and coveted jewels of the ancient nation’s diadem—whose people look towards the Motherland with faith unconquerable—Roumania’s dearest dream would be consummated. For there lies her ancient capital; the mausoleum of her kings, the many precious monuments and records of the past. All her historic tradition^ point to these lost provinces as the home of her ancient people. “ Les Carpathes sont notre histoire, les Carpathes sont le berceau de notre race ” is the deep national sentiment voiced by one of their statesmen.



**INFANTRY ON THE MARCH IN THE CARPATHIANS.**



**THE KING AND QUEEN DECORATING SOLDIERS.**

**J-Tiute Nicholas in uniform of ihț Boy Scouts,**

[www.dacoromanica.ro](http://www.dacoromanica.ro)

## THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 121

The main problem of Roumania's *Risorgimento* and the principal cause for her entry into the European war centres round the question of her four million sons in Transylvania, exiled and cruelly oppressed by the Austro-Hungarian Government. Whatever claim the Austrian historians may put forward there is no doubt that Transylvania has always been Roumanian, that the Daco-Roumans occupied the northern bank of the Danube from earliest times, and that it was not until the tenth century that the Magyar irruption into Transylvania took place. They found Wallachia inhabited by large numbers of Daco-Roumans, and it seems that the Magyars derived their first civilization from these Roumans, adopting Latin as their official language.

The Roumanian language, spoken by twelve millions of people, is the most ancient of the neo-Latin tongues, a mixture of a vulgar Latin spoken by the Latinized Roman citizen and the tongue of the vanquished Dacian. Byzantine historians aver that it was spoken in the sixth century, and in 571 the Roumanians when attacked and put to flight by the savage avare tribesmen reformed their ranks shouting, " Touma ! Touma, fratre."<sup>1</sup>

In Wallachia and especially Transylvania, the cradle of the race, the population spoke " frequent Latine," or as an English traveller wrote in 1673 of the people he met in Transylvania who " have the commendation to speak generally Latin."<sup>2</sup> It certainly was spoken from earliest times and long before the Magyar invasion. In none of the documents between 1291 and 1830 is there found but the slightest trace of Magyar peasantry in Transylvania. This tongue has continued ever since, " a mother "<sup>1</sup> *Travels in Hungary*. London, 1673. <sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

122 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY tongue, a speech of daily intercourse, the only means of expression for

the land worker and the shepherd in the mountains, and it has caught in its cadence the very soul of the race.”<sup>1</sup>

”Again, the very great number of place names show that the Rouman tongue was in use there previous to the seventh century, and the very large preponderance of Roumanians over the Hungarian population—which has persisted through the centuries notwithstanding the long systematic ill treatment, suppression and helotry—is a still further convincing proof of this, affording a very powerful argument in favour of the Roumanian, and very little for the Magyar claim, while the dictum *prior tempore potior jure* could surely always be substantially advanced by the former.

The Magyar, like the Turk, rules the unfortunate races that come under his lash with the bitterest oppression, reaction and oligarchism, indeed Christian populations have often preferred Turkish suzerainty to the atrocious and savage despotism of the Christian and Apostolic Empire. In 1822 Milos, the great Liberator of Serbia, said : “If you sum everything up you will agree with me that it would be better for the Serbians to endure the tyranny of the Turks than to lie down under the yoke that Austria is preparing for them.”

The Roumanians in Transylvania defended their rights against the usurper with stubborn tenacity. Between 1291 and 1848 there were five big revolutions against the Magyar tyranny. These were put down with revolting cruelty. On one occasion, Georghe Doja, the leader, was dressed as a king and “ was set upon a red-hot iron

<sup>1</sup> M. Beza, *Times Literary Supplement*, January, 1918.

THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 123 throne, an iron crown was put on his head and a sceptre of the same in his hand, both red-hot. In this state halfroasted, nine of his principal accomplices, nearly starved to death with hunger, were let loose upon him and ate their pretended king. The others who would not were immediately cut to pieces, and this

implacable hatred and injustice to the people of Transylvania exists even to-day.<sup>1</sup> “Here in this land neither a Saxon will marry a Hungarian nor a Wallachian with a Hungarian,” and Count Tisza has voiced their Hungarian fear when he says, “Magyar and Germans will be overflowed with, the Roumanian population of Transylvania,” and indeed he only speaks the truth of this annexed land, the special Latinity of Transylvania and its preponderantly Roumanian population and history.

“*Nowhere in the world has Austria done good,*” said Gladstone, and history can testify that everywhere she has done evil.

The Roumanians in Transylvania number about 3,500,000, but there are also to be included in the exiled sons of this race those in Bessarabia and elsewhere. An approximate figure of the Roumanian race distributed in Eastern Europe and the Balkan Peninsula would be as follows :—

Roumania proper .....	7,000,000
Transylvania .....	3,500,000
Bessarabia .....	1,370,000
Bukovina .....	230,000
Serbia .....	200,000
Coutza-Vlachs or Arimoni of the Balkans .	450,000
	12,750,000

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in Hungary*. Robert Townson, LL.D., F.R.S., 1793, Edinburgh.

It will thus be seen that nearly four millions of her countrymen are condemned to harsh restrictions and the arbitrary rule of the Dual Monarchy. With relentless despotism, first the Austrian, later the Hungarian, have tried to reduce the spirit of this people ; to stamp out, in arrogant Magyar way, all that was Latin in their nature. But with the courage, the tenacity so often bom of desperation, the sword, the gibbet, the cell, even famine itself, has failed to crush them or make them betray their language, faith and customs held through a thousand years of strife.

Take Ionescu, the ardent apostle of Roumanian Irredenta, and



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the distinguished statesman, has said : “ If I thought that the Roumanians of Transylvania could ever conceivably become Magyar I should give up politics altogether ; for it would no longer be worth while for us Roumanians of the kingdom to go on living.”

Hungarian has been made the official language. In the schools and churches Magyar has been forced upon the Roumanian people, and this notwithstanding that in some districts the population of Roumanian to Magyar is 63 to 23.

“ In all Hungary there is no official Roumanian school either elementary or superior. The poor Roumanian peasant since the beginning of last century has established schools for his children by voluntary subscription. The Hungarians became furious and when by the settlement of 1868 they became unjustly, and contrary to all historical rights, masters of Transylvania, they did all they could to annihilate those schools. ... In one year alone 400 Roumanian schools were destroyed and replaced by Hungarian ones.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Roumania Irredenta*, N, Lupu.

### THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 125

Almost every newspaper has been suppressed at one time or the other, and Roumanian journalists have been condemned in the last eighteen years to terms of imprisonment amounting to more than a hundred years, and fines for criticizing the Magyars—*lese-magyarism* as it is called—aggregating 250,000 francs. Their miscarriage of justice is as notorious and unjust as the iniquitous examples in Croatia, and the Magyar police rule with a brutality and inhumanity that is almost unimaginable. The constant, rigorous prosecution for dancing the national dances, singing the songs, wearing the colours, reading Roumanian books, are too numerous to mention. The law can take any children away from their parents, should they bear a grudge against them, or consider them incompetent, and hand

them over to infant asylums to be denationalized. Could anything be more revolting in this the twentieth century of a so-called civilization ?

Politically the Roumans have no rights, and the utmost abuse is resorted to, to prevent them getting the extremely limited and restricted franchise allowed them. In the last general election of 1910, terrorization, repression and corruption of the grossest form were used, and immense numbers of soldiers were despatched to give effect to this wholesale suppression of elementary political rights. Astounded at the general outcry, the Hungarian Government reluctantly admitted that it had “ only employed 194 battalions of infantry and 114 squadrons of cavalry to secure their aims against unarmed civilians ! ”

Out of 4,000,000 Roumanians of Transylvania, representing 80 per cent of the population, only five members Of the National Roumanian Party have seats, though by the Hungarian census the number should have been at least 80 ! On the other hand, the Hungarians whose numbers are so enormously inferior to the Roumanian send 300 ! As a writer has said : “ What would the world say if the British Government only allowed four Irish Home Rulers instead of eighty-six to sit in the House of Commons, yet the Roumanians form between a sixth and a fifth of the total population of Hungary, whereas the Irish (including Ulster Unionists) are about a tenth of the total population of the British Isles.”<sup>1</sup>

So-called justice is administered in the Magyar tongue, and in the Magyar fashion, and so prejudiced is it that if a Roumanian takes his case to court his cause is lost in advance. Hundreds of thousands of this fine race have fled from this oppression and sinister tyranny, and have emigrated to the States ; that new free world, now allied with the battling nations to crush this monstrous Austro- German octopus that slowly strangles to death all that it grasps within its poisonous clutch.

So cruel was the oppression meted out to the Roumans that on the occasion of the Emperor Franz Joseph's tour through Transylvania, it was necessary for the Government to decree that the wholesale execution of Roumanians must be suspended for the time, in order that His Apostolic Majesty might not incur the inconvenience of seeing the roads on which he passed lined with corpses !

Stubborn endurance has kept this Latin race pure. Separated from the mother country, many of these Roumanian exiles are of the finest type, intellectually, politically, economically, and have contributed numerous names distinguished in science, art and letters to Europe.

\* A. W. Leeper, *Justice of the Roumanian Cause*.

THE WOOF AND WARP OF HER DESTINY 127 Like standard bearers they hold aloft the flag of their national culture amongst the alien and Slav races which surround them.

They have waited long for redemption, for justice and the right to live. The years have taught them patience, and they will not waver or fail till the day of reunion and national resurrection comes.

Cogalniceanu's stirring words, " We have the same origin as our brothers ; the same language, name and faith. In the past we have suffered the same grief and we now have to assure for ourselves the same future," are words of hope and determination which we free peoples of the British Empire can truly applaud and echo. For as England could never suffer *her* sons, or *her* soil, to languish under hated oppression, so let us hope that the hour of deliverance and reunion may not be long delayed for Roumania and *her* lost lands.

\* \* \* \*

Many countries, America, Italy and even Germany herself, have gradually developed from various and distracted states into a homogeneous united nation; so it is not unreasonable to

hope that political co-operation strengthened by military union will eventually weld these several countries into a community of interest. Herein alone lies their true line of progress and only safeguard. United they may stand and survive all perils. Divided they will surely fall.

It must be evident that only by unity of interest and power can these States of Eastern Europe protect themselves against the increasing intrigues of the Central Empires. The pacification of these near Eastern countries can only be secured by their own co-operation, and by the

128 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY granting to them of fundamental racial rights, the recognition of which is a supreme necessity for their peace and progress. The ancient provinces of Bessarabia, Transylvania, and the Bukovina, peopled with Roumanians, should be reunited to Roumania. To Serbia should be joined her lands of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia and Slavonia ; and to Bulgaria that part of Macedonia distinctly Bulgarian in blood.

No lasting peace can come to Roumania and these storm-tossed Eastern States, ceaselessly subjected to the intrigue and covetousness of the aggressive Central Powers, until political boundaries, dependent on racial principles, are secured for them.

Just so long as these nations are divided from their brethren by arbitrary, artificial frontiers and remorseless tyranny, will there be unhappiness and bloodshed in the Balkans.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GREAT DECISION

I made the mistake of my career, when I had the opportunity, that I did not remove the Hohenzollerns from the throne of Prussia. As long as this house reigns and until the red cap of liberty is erected in Germany, there will be no peace in Europe.—*Napoleon.*

f~■ ^HE two years that followed the declaration of  
■ the European War were the most momentous  
| period in the history of Roumania. Though  
never a member of the Triple Alliance as Italy was,  
she had, it was surmised, certain engagements for defensive  
purposes ; but unlike Italy—whose pact was publicly  
acknowledged and ratified by successive Parliaments and  
people—Roumania's agreement remained a secret one, never  
revealed to the people or ratified by the Government, it having  
been more or less the work of the King, who had kept the  
foreign policy of his country largely in his own hands.

Indeed, when Russia took Roumania's northern province of Bessarabia from her in 1878, a rapprochement with the Central Powers seemed the safest and only possible policy under the circumstances.

Titu Maiorescu, writing in the *Deutsche Revue*—1st January, 1881—a much discussed article, advocated an orientation towards the Central Powers, and certainly several of the Conservatives as well as the Liberals of that day were in agreement with his principles.



King Charles, after fostering for forty-eight years the closest political and economical rapprochement with Germany, believed that the interests of Roumania lay there. He felt sure of the victory of the Central Alliance and believed that Roumania would benefit by espousing its cause, while the land of his birth, so powerful in organization and resources, was his model for all that he had dreamed, hoped and planned for his adopted country. But his people thought otherwise.

An interesting sidelight into the secret history of this period is afforded in the letters of Count Czemin, Austria's Foreign Minister, who was Minister to the Roumanian capital in 1914 and 1915. He was a close friend and confidant of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, on whom the Roumanians had fixed their hopes for an amelioration of the position of their brothers in Transylvania. His keen insight and sympathy with the racial difficulties of the Empire and his well-known hope of being able to secure some justice for them on his accession to the throne, had fired their expectations, which were overwhelmed when the terrible disaster at Serajevo occurred nearly four years ago, precipitating the present War.

The famous Austrian Red Book shows in the following very interesting notes from Count Czemin's letters, how he tried to induce Roumania to join the Central Powers. He had received instructions from Count Berchtold, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, to communicate to the King and Roumanian Government the contents of the ultimatum Austria was sending to Serbia.

The whole world knows the arbitrary and outrageous character of this ultimatum, which the unfortunate country was compelled to answer within forty-eight hours. It is also a matter of common knowledge that even if Serbia had accepted the ultimatum in its entirety, there was not the slightest intention on



the part of Austria—backed by Germany—to stay the full measure of covetous vengeance which she had determined to inflict on her, and to destroy her status as an independent kingdom and reduce her to a state of vassalage.

Austria-Hungary wanted, of course, to undo the Treaty of Bucharest, which left a greater Serbia and which had also definitely put a stop to the long cherished Austrian designs on Salonica.

Accompanying the copy of the ultimatum Count Berchtold sent the following note to Count Czernin to present to King Charles in explanation of the ultimatum to Serbia :

“The King knows how much love His Apostolic Majesty has for peace and the sense of his high responsibility. . . . Unhappily, there remains no hope of finding a pacific issue.

“Austria-Hungary is not pursuing any selfish plan in Serbia, but she must defend her rights against a neighbour whose whole policy is to detach from the Monarchy her frontier population. This must be stopped.

“We do not aim at any territorial aggrandisement in Servia, so we have to hope that, if war becomes necessary, it may be localised.

“We expect from the King fidelity to treaties, and that in his high wisdom he will maintain Roumania in a state of strict neutrality. We ourselves, remembering our duty as Alfies, will not undertake any decision touching Roumania’s interests without coming to a prior understanding with her.

“Shou'd Russia adopt an aggressive attitude towards us, we should reckon upon the loyal co-operation of Roumania as being our Ally.”

In reply the King informed Count Czernin that he guaranteed Roumanian neutrality, and Count Czernin in his letter after the audience adds that if Russia intervened on the side of Serbia “

We could, alas ! with difficulty reckon on the military intervention of Roumania.”

He continues : “ I never saw the King so much moved as when he told me that if he followed the biddings of his heart, his army would march by the side of the Triple Alliance (Italy still officially belonged to it, not having yet seceded), but that he could not ; so many changes had happened in the year that it had become an impossibility for him to keep his engagements. Nevertheless, he begged me to let Your Excellency know that if Russia should enter the conflict, he would keep a strict neutrality ; no force in the world could oblige him to take arms against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.”

\* \* \* \*

On August 5th, 1914, a Crown Council was summoned to the beautiful Palace at Sinaia, the summer resort of the Court in the Carpathians, facing the sinister Austrian frontier. Addressing his Ministers, King Carol earnestly argued for the validity of this convention. The Government protested that though it might exist, the treaty had never been ratified by Parliament, and one well-known statesman pointed out that neither he nor his colleagues had ever seen the text of the agreement, and that if it existed, the secret way in which it had been arrived at was contrary to all constitutional procedure, and to the general understanding that no treaties with foreign States should be valid unless the sanction of both political parties had been obtained.

The declaration of Italy's neutrality strengthened the opposition of the Government, which refused to consent to King Carol's contention that Roumania's interest as well as her honour was involved in intervention. The King, finding the Government firm, had to yield to the inevitable. Profoundly chagrined at the result, he remarked to the Council: "

Gentlemen, you cannot realize how bitter it is to find oneself isolated in a country of which one is not a native.” To which one of the most distinguished statesmen present replied : " In peace time it was possible for your Majesty to follow a policy contrary to the sentiment of the country, but to make war in defiance of that sentiment is impossible.”

This famous Council, which was representative of all the political parties of the State, Cabinet Ministers, ex-Prime Ministers, Party Leaders, as well as distinguished personages of independent position, voted by a large majority against intervention and declared in favour of neutrality. So greatly did King Carol take this decision to heart that at the conclusion of this historic conference he is reported to have said : " Gentlemen, you have acted no doubt according to what you consider the interests of your country, but you have destroyed my work of forty-six years.”

Reluctant to accept the decision—a definite and national one—he made a final appeal to the Army—which had been modelled on German lines and instructed by Prussian officers—but here also the vote by an overwhelming majority was definitely against the King’s desire for intervention on the side of the Central Powers.

In one of his communiques to Baron Burian, Czernin admits that “ Here they are only seeking to gain time till the European War has given results. If we are the conquerors, and this is the opinion of the King, Roumania will join us, but should fortune betray us, then the *mot d’ordre* “ partition of the monarchy ” will be raised again and Roumania will join our enemies ; but I believe the King would abdicate before he would consent to that. Finally, all depends on our success in the theatre of war.”

A month later, on September 19th, he wrote to Vienna : “ The news of the retreat of our army has increased the desire to strike

us a mortal blow. They are afraid of being too late in at the death of the monarchy. The King is the only brake left on the downgrade. Let us be patient and let the shouters yell. The first success we have against the Russians, all will be silent again."

The unhappy King, whose end was undoubtedly hastened by the position in which he found himself, in opposition to the wishes of his country, mortified and tormented by the failure to prove his sympathies with the Central Powers, and by the antagonistic demonstrations against Austria, remarked to Czernin in the last interval before his death, "I only wish to die, so that there may be an end of it all."

Czernin, in describing his last visit to the dying Monarch, describes the state of mind of the unhappy King. "The fear of being obliged to fail in keeping his word, of committing a felony, of dishonouring himself in one word, was so odious that he appeared to be crushed by it. And the old man is alone."

\* \* \* \*

The country was at one with the Government in its declaration of neutrality. Though prosperous then, it was in no condition to rush into a war of such magnitude as Armageddon promised to be. It was abhorrent to the people that they should have to fight beside their hereditary foe, the "accursed Magyar," the oppressor of their four million kinsmen. Their race, language, traditions, all were akin to the Latins—how could they fight against them?

The country was not prepared for war. Equipment and munitions were lacking, the frontier terribly long and difficult for defence. Owing to the secret understanding between King Carol and Austria, his unbounded belief in Germany and confidence that war could never result with these Powers, the country found itself with few strategical railways, the nearest lateral one being at a distance of fifty miles from the frontier.

No fortresses exist on the Roumanian frontier except those rude Nature had provided among the rocks of the Carpathians, while the Danube and the small flotilla of river monitors were the only protection to the south against Bulgarian attack.

Another unfortunate result of King Carol's policy was that the Government had of late years imported from Germany virtually everything in the way of munitions and equipment for the army, so that at the outbreak of hostilities the country found itself completely unprovided with arsenals or munition factories.

Meanwhile, the very large percentage of Germans engaged in the "peaceful commercial penetration" of the country launched out into a vigorous and determined campaign of political propaganda.

Agency bureaux were started all over the land, large

sums of money being expended in circulating thousands of brochures and pamphlets glorifying the power and ideals of the Teutonic Alliance and disseminating the usual sensational German-made lies about the Entente. The pro-German politicians Carp and Marghiloman placed their influence with the Press at the disposition of the Central Powers. Carp's paper, *Moldova*, was uncompromisingly pro-German, but represented, nevertheless, the opinion of a really sincere man. As for Marghiloman, though not openly connected with a newspaper he had much influence, and his policy, a double-faced one, was to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. German agents raked in, by dint of much bribery and vast expenditure, a great number of small provincial papers, in which they could circulate the falsehoods which it was too absurd to expect the *intelligentsia* of the big towns to believe. The organs of Filipescu and Take Jonescu—the valiant advocates of the Entente—and General Crainicianu, headed the counter-attack with great energy and decision.

The campaign on the German side was conducted by Baron von dem Biissche, the German Minister at Bucharest, a typical Prussian, scheming, unscrupulous, and peculiarly imbued with the Prussian dogma that the end justifies the means. The Kaiser's policy during the past years had been to nurse carefully the Roumanian situation, and many distinguished German diplomatists had at one time or another been posted to the Roumanian capital, among them Kiderlein Wachter, Prince von Bulow and Marschall von Bieberstein, while Count Gulochowski, Prince Furstenberg and Count Aehrenthal had represented the Dual Monarchy.

The German-subsidized Press was naturally supported by Berlin, and the most fallacious and grotesque misstatements about Britain and her Allies were distributed daily. Any delay

in negotiations was construed into treachery, and the “ dreimal verdamnte Englisch ” were accused of every felony and sin. With pride the German agents pointed to the brotherly true-hearted interest, the sympathetic attitude of the Central Powers, who lavishly expended money and gifts in bribing the nation—the flower-festooned brass-bedecked trains, the ‘ Carmen Sylva ’ and the ‘ Mercury,’ that arrived in pomp and glory, like the Queen of Sheba, laden with precious gifts, to the strains of the band provided by the German Legation !

It strikes one as the more astonishing and admirable that notwithstanding such a shameless and insidious propaganda the bulk of the nation resisted, and remained true to the national ideals, closing their ears to the lure of the German sirens weighted with gold.

The death of King Carol in October, 1914, followed very shortly afterwards by that of his old adviser and statesman, Demetrius Sturdza, removed two of the strongest pro-German forces for intervention. He was succeeded by his nephew, Prince Ferdinand of Hohenzollem, who on the death of King Carol’s only child in 1875 had come to Roumania and been nominated the heir- apparent.

Few thrones are secure in these democratic days, and those of the Near East, unstable at all times, are doubly so at the present, when the republican spirit is blowing so fiercely over Europe and dynasties are tottering before its chilly breath.

The only Balkan dynasty that is rooted in the soil is that of Serbia, the others are all of exotic origin ; but King Ferdinand has shown himself a true Roumanian and a constitutional monarch of the very highest type. Simple, straightforward, and sincere, he has none of the blatant braggadocia of the Kaiser or the tinsel flamboyance of his furtive and treacherous neighbour, Ferdinand “ the Coburger,” King of Bulgaria. King Ferdinand

of Roumania is conspicuously endowed with a spirit of lofty patriotism, deep regard for his people, and above all with a profound sense of his duty to the nation.

During 1915 popular Irredente opinion made many successful counter attacks against the German Press, but Bratiano, the Prime Minister, held his hand, and adopted a policy of "Wait and see," which earned for himself the name of the " Sphinx " in the general opinion of Europe.

In April, 1915, it was proposed to Roumania that she should discuss matters with the Cabinet at Petrograd. After an informal conference, it was agreed that in return for her neutrality she should be allowed her claim to the " countries inhabited by the Roumanians of Austro- Hungary," the stipulation being that she should occupy Transylvania " par les armes," before the conclusion of the war. These tentative negotiations did not develop very quickly, and in June Austria became restive and is alleged to have made an offer to Roumania of the Bukovina and a guarantee of the most satisfactory treatment of the Roumanians in Transylvania, if in return she would intervene on their side. Germany added the lure of Bessarabia. These offers synchronized with the advance of the German armies eastwards, Mackensen







**H.M. KING FERDINAND**



II.M. QUEEN MARIE IN HOSPITAL DRESS.



having entered Przemyśl and Bohm-Ermolli Lemberg. It seemed the moment of triumph for the pro-German interventionists. But public opinion, as well as that of the Government, was suspicious of the honourable intentions of the Central Powers. Bethmann-Hollweg's and the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin's contempt for treaties—"mere scraps of paper"—had deprived German assurances of all reliability, and Germany was generally regarded as like the old Irishwoman who remarked that "she had too much consideration for the truth to be dragging her out on every occasion." The offers were refused.

Bratianu's reluctance to take such a momentous decision cannot be wondered at under the circumstances. Greatly though the country desired to come to the aid of Serbia and to collaborate with Venizelos in his desire for intervention, there was the treacherous spirit of the Greek King and General Staff to be reckoned with. The heroic but disastrous Dardanelles campaign could afford them no prospect of help in that direction, while they feared the Western Powers might only be able to give them "diplomatic" assistance. Roumania had only enough ammunition for a campaign of three months, and the various Powers, uncertain of how she would decide, showed a reluctance in providing her with the necessary equipment, while her long frontier, surrounded by German, Austrian, Turkish and Bulgar troops, rendered her liable to complete military isolation.

The circumstances demanded the most cautious policy or she would have found herself in the position of a bee in a wasp's nest, and Bratianu, with the tragic desolation of Belgium and Serbia before his eyes, and the bloody



14° ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY revenge the Central Powers would exact in case of defeat, must be excused for hesitating to embark his country in warlike adventure before it was adequately equipped and *every guarantee for support given him*. But the principal consideration lay in the field of international policy.

Bulgaria's reputation for perfidy, and her equivocal attitude, rendered it essential at the outset to have a clear understanding with her before Roumania could shape her policy. The cession of a small portion of the Dobrudja, the district of Silistria, to Roumania on the conclusion of the Balkan War, at the Treaty of Bucharest, had been the fine inflicted on Bulgaria for her treachery in turning on her Allies. It seemed the only solution at the time for establishing again a balance of power, but it was generally recognized as not entirely satisfactory, a *pis alter* for the moment. It was also evident to the Roumanian statesmen that in the event of participation in the war the advantage of Bulgarian neutrality, or her intervention on the side of the Entente, was of the first importance, and Bucharest realized that no friendly relations could be hoped for until the settlement of the Dobrudja awarded Roumania at the Treaty of Bucharest was revised, and that it was advisable, in order to further the general cause of the Allies, to offer to restore to Bulgaria some part of the Dobrudja if Greece and Serbia would also contribute some share of Serbian or Greek Macedonia. But the inherent rapacity of the Bulgar was not content with such small bait. His fantastic and exaggerated claims produced a deadlock, which the weak and hesitating diplomacy of the Entente only served to strengthen.





Another important point to be considered was the promise to Russia of the Straits. This being Roumania's sole outlet to the Mediterranean it was of paramount importance that she should be assured of security and free rights of access for her maritime commerce on an equal footing with Russia.



In the early autumn of 1915 three great events occurred which placed Roumania in a critical position. Bulgaria under its Magyar-Bourbon king—whom his French relatives called, with contemptuous disdain, “ the pedlar ”—this pinchbeck despot, a combination of poltroonery, abhorrent habits, and base duplicity, after haggling with the opposing Powers in vulgar bagman spirit, mobilized his armies on the Roumanian and Serbian frontiers. The shifty intrigues of his spiritual brother, Constantine of Greece, another “ puppet king ”—a tyrant at home and the pliant tool of his country's enemies abroad—had compelled that great patriot Venizelos to resign. Lastly, after more than a year of wonderful fighting, Belgrade, “ the white city ”—now red with the blood of her valiant defenders—was occupied by the Teutonic forces.

Intense excitement prevailed in Bucharest, and a big demonstration of the people demanded immediate intervention to save Serbia and to realize the Greater Roumania which was to free their exiled brethren beyond the border.

Filipescu and Ionescu, the pro-Entente leaders, working with extraordinary energy, their wonderful brains and marvellous gifts of oratory engaged in combating the unashamed and pernicious flow of Germanophile propaganda, called on Bratianu in a stirring manifesto to reform the Cabinet. They urgently “ demanded what Republican France has obtained, national union. Men of all parties and men attached to no parties—let them unite, even the Liberals, and form a government which should have no other care than for the

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interests of the land ”—continuing, “ We ought respectfully to address ourselves to the King, and say to him, ‘ Sire, give us sacred union.’” Jonescu furthered the appeal by calling upon the King to prove himself “ the best of Roumanians,” urging that the dynasty would only be strong “ when it has its roots this side of the Carpathians. ...”

But the difficulties in the way of intermediate intervention were still unsunnountable. “ We march as soon as we have the munitions,” such was Bratianu’s assurance. Support for the northern and southern frontiers was also asked for, and it was stipulated that an increase in the force at Salonica and an offensive there should be timed at Roumania’s intervention, in order to draw off the full force of the Bulgar forces, who would at once attack the Roumanian frontier. *This demand was of the utmost necessity and was one of Roumania’s paramount conditions, for this co-operation was vitally necessary.*

*La Roumania* writes in May, 1916, “ The Roumanians only await a sign from Salonica to cross the Carpathians.” Roumania’s territorial demands were entirely confined to the redemption of her race in exile, and she did not propose to declare war on either Germany or Bulgaria.

But this course was impracticable, and Germany, trembling for her cherished Berlin to Bagdad scheme and apprehensive of her partner’s weakening powers, would not stand aside.

\* \* \* \*

Events were moving rapidly. Roumania stood on the edge of the precipice. The great flood swirling beneath her was swollen and foaming a crimson hue with the blood of the millions fighting for their lives among the sharks.

Ready to come to their assistance Roumania stood stripped, and waiting for the call to plunge into the vortex. . . . Excitement in the capital was at fever heat. Baron von dem Biissche, the German Minister, had begged for an audience, and when

received by the King a dramatic scene occurred. Von dem Biissche, in great agitation and with tears in his eyes, had implored the King not to depart from neutrality, declaring that a Hohenzollem could not make war on a Hohenzollem. To which the King had answered, that he was first and foremost King of Roumania, and must follow the national will.

A Crown Council was summoned by King Ferdinand for the following morning, August 26th, to be held at the charming old Palace of Cotroceni, standing in its peaceful woods without the city. The whole population was on the tiptoe of excitement, crowds filling the streets and watching anxiously the ministers as they whirled past in their cars towards the Palace.

At ten o'clock the King entered the Council Chamber, and as President received the Assembly of Ministers and Statesmen. A moment of tense silence preceded his declaration. With white face but unfaltering voice, he informed them that the moment had arrived to liberate their suffering kinsmen in Transylvania, and that he had convened the Assembly for the purpose of ascertaining their desire as to the declaration of war. Repeating the phrase he had used to Von dem Biissche, he stated that he would abide by the decision of the majority. The Germanophile members raised no objection, saying that if war was declared, they would give their full support to the Government, and the decision was carried with only three dissentient votes.

The King declared an immediate state of war to exist between Roumania and Austria-Hungary. . . .

With deep emotion, but in accents of great conviction, he exclaimed : " May Roumania conquer her enemies, as I have conquered myself." Great words indeed, suited to a supreme crisis. The die had been cast.

\* \* \* \*

The Council was followed by stirring appeals by the King to his army and the nation. The first was as follows :—

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" Soldiers, I have called you to bear your standards beyond the frontiers, where our brothers await you impatiently, their hearts full of hope. The shades of the great Voivodes, Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great, whose mortal remains rest in the lands you go to deliver, will lead you to victory as worthy successors of the soldiers who were victorious at Rasboieni, Calugareni, and at Plevna. You will fight by the side of the great nations to whom we are united. A desperate struggle awaits you. You will support its weight, and with God's help victory will be ours. Show yourselves worthy of the glory of your ancestors. Throughout the ages a whole people will bless you and sing your praises."

To the nation, King Ferdinand appealed in the accents of a lofty patriotism :—

“ ROUMANIANS !

“ The war, which now for two years has hemmed in our frontiers more and more closely, has shaken the old foundations of Europe and shown that henceforth it is solely on a national foundation that the peaceful life of its peoples can be assured. It has brought this day, which has been awaited for centuries by the national conscience : the day of the union of the Roumanian race. After interminable centuries of misfortune and cruel trials our ancestors succeeded in founding the Roumanian State, through the union of the Principalities, through the War of Independence, and through indefatigable labour from the national renaissance. To-day, it is given to us to assure unshakably and in its fulness the work realized for the moment by Michael the Brave : the union of the Roumanians on both sides of the Carpathians. It is on us that it depends to-day to deliver from foreign domination our brothers beyond the mountains and the lands of Bukovina, where Stephen the Great sleeps his eternal sleep. It is in us, in the virtues of the race, in

our gallantry that Eves the powerful force which will give them once more the right to prosper in peace, in conformity with the customs and the aspirations of our common race, in a complete and free Roumania, from the Theiss to the sea.

“ We Roumanians, animated by the sacred duty which weighs on us, are resolved like men to confront all the sacrifices inseparable from a bitter war. We set forth for the struggle with the enthusiasm of a people which has unshakable faith in its destinies.

“ The glorious fruits of victory will be our recompense.

“ With the help of God—forward I ”

Roumania had crossed the rubicon. The first blast of the war clarion was summoning her armies to the grim Carpathian ranges, and the new Ally had joined the ranks of European chivalry in arms.

“ Hark ! I hear the tramp of thousands,

And of armdd men the hum ;

Lo ! a nation's hosts have gathered

Round the quick alarming drum,—

Saying \* Come, Freeman, come !

Ere your heritage be wasted,’ said the quick alarming drum.”

## PART II

### TO-DAY

## CHAPTER VII

### FROM MY SOUL TO THEIRS

*By H.M. the Queen of Roumania*

THE trains are passing, passing—and the cargo they are hurrying thither is the youth of **B**our country, the hope of our homes. By thousands they are massed together, they sit on the roofs of the waggons, they hang on to their sides, they balance themselves in perilous positions, but all of them are gay—they shout, they sing, they laugh.

And the trains pass, pass—all day the trains pass. With hands full of flowers, we hurry to the stations; our hearts are heavy, we long to say words they will remember, to tell them what we feel, but their voices raised in chorus drown all we would say.

One cry is on every lip when they see me : " We are going ! Going gladly, going to victory, so that you may become Empress, Empress of all the Roumanians ! " There is hardly a voice that does not say it, it is the cry of every heart, they hope it, they believe it, they mean it to be, and I smile back at them offering them my flowers which they clutch at with eager hands.

And thus the trains pass—pass.

\* \* \* \*

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One evening the sun was going down in glowing glory, turning all it shone over into glittering gold—I was late, other duties having kept me back, the train I had come to greet was already moving away.

In joyous crowds the young soldiers thronged the carriages ; others had been before me to deck their caps, their tunics, even their horses and cannons with bright violet asters of every shade. The prodigious radiance of sunset fell over all those flowers, enhancing their beauty, as though even the heavens were doing their utmost to render more blessed the departure of those eager boys who so gaily were going to death.

Hurriedly I ran towards the moving carriages, distressed at being late. A great shout mounted from a thousand throats as they recognized me, and a shower of flowers fell at my feet.

From their caps, their tunics, their cannons, they tore away the flowers that had been given them to shower them over their Queen, whilst the usual chorus mounted to the skies : " May you become Empress ! Empress of all the Roumanians."

And always more flowers fell over me, my arms were full, my hands could hardly hold them, the ground was purple where I stood.

Long did I remain there after the train had disappeared. A trail of smoke against the orange sky alone marked its passage, and all those fading flowers at my feet.

As one looks at the incomprehensible, I gazed at those two long rails running into the infinite, there seeming to join their separate ways, and wondered towards what Fate those youths were hurrying, wondered if their



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dream would be realized, especially I wondered how many would come back.

The sun had set, the smoke had dissolved into nothing, the voices of my soldiers were but a remembrance. Slowly I turned my foot towards home.

All day long I have been moving amongst the wounded, wandering from ward to ward—they all want me to come amongst them, each soldier desires to see his Queen.

Never do I leave a call unanswered, everywhere do I go, no sight is too sad, no fatigue too great, no way too long, but sometimes it is to me as though I were wandering through some never-ending dream.

Bed beside bed they He there, and all eyes meet me, follow me, consume me ; never before have I known what it means to be the prey of so many eyes—they seem to be drawing my heart from my bosom, to be a weight I can hardly bear !

I bend over suffering faces, clasp outstretched hands, lay my fingers upon heated brows, gaze into dying eyes, hsten to whispered words—and everywhere the same wish follows me : " May you become Empress, Empress of all the Roumanians." Stiffening Ups murmur it to me, hopeful voices cry it out to me, it goes with me wherever I move : " What matter our suffering as long as you become Empress ; Empress of all the Roumanians ! " Infinitely touching are the words when they mount towards me from the beds of so many wounded, who see in me the reahzation, the incarnation of the dream for which they are giving their Eves.

It makes me feel so small, so humble before their stoic endurance ; tears come to my eyes, and yet because of the beauty of it, I have a great wish to thank God.

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Why should I be chosen to represent an ideal, why should just I be the symbol ? What right have I to stand above them, to buy glory with the shedding of their blood ?

And always more tenderly do I pass from bed to bed.

\* \* \* \*

That was at a time when hope still sang in every soul, when in the first enthusiasm all hearts beat in unison, when belief in glorious victory gladdened the day.

But much later under widely different circumstances in quite another place, the same words were said to me by one who could not see my face, for that morning he had been trepanned, his bandaged head was lying in a pool of blood.

Someone told him that his Queen was beside him, that she had come to see him, to enquire about his sufferings, to help him if he needed help.

A groping hand was stretched out towards me. I took it in mine, whispering words of comfort, bending low towards the parched lips that were murmuring something that at first I could not understand. The man had no face, no eyes, all was swathed in blood-stained cloths. Then as though from very far came the words, the same brave words : “ May the Great God protect you, may he let you live to become Empress—Empress of all the Roumanians ! ”

It was to me as though something very wonderful had quite suddenly descended upon the distress of my soul, something very holy, very beautiful, but that was almost more than I could bear. Touching had been that wish when hope shone before us like a star, but now it was more than touching, it was grand and sacred, for it

FROM MY SOUL TO THEIRS 153 was pronounced at an hour when darkest disaster had overthrown our land, when inch by inch our armies were retreating before the all-invading foe. There in that chamber of suffering those dying lips still spoke of the hope they clung to, of the Dream, that in spite of sacrifice, death and misery, one day must surely come true.

That dying man was but one of many, a voice out of the unknown, a martyr without a name ; but his words had gone home to my heart. As I bent over him, laying my hand gently upon his crimson-stained rags, I prayed to God to listen to his wish, prayed that the blood of so many humble heroes should not be given in vain, prayed that when the great hour of liberation should sound at last, an echo of the shout of victory that that day would sound all over our land, should reach the heart of this nameless one beyond the Shadow into which he was sinking, so that even beyond the grave he should still have a share in the glory his living eyes were not destined to see.

#### THE COMING OF SPRING

Spring is coming ! The snow is melting, the air is full of sounds of life ! Like a warm promise the sun smiles down upon those who long to hope. How is it possible not to hope when the grass is sprouting and the birds beginning to build their nests ?

Like a hideous nightmare that on awakening we leave behind us with the darkness of night, this winter that had thrown its chains about us retreats ever further as we go forward into the growing light.

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It is to me as though I saw many faces, with different expressions all turned towards this resurrection of light. Tired faces, suffering faces, faces with eyes that have looked closely at death—but beside them, there are also the faces of children and other faces, of those who can smile, of those who can hope and of those who can forget.

Even into the most hidden comers does the new light carry its message of hope. Out of dank, dark hovels miserable creatures crawl forth to stare with wonder at the sun, for so long had he forgotten to shine upon those whose sufferings can only be equalled by the patience with which those sufferings were borne. The mud and filth of their surroundings become less sordid ; I have seen ghostly faces lifted towards the skies as though some great joy were hiding behind the clouds. Even the beggar's outstretched hand seems to be extended rather towards the growing warmth than towards the scarce coin thrown to him by those hurrying by.

But above all it is the faces of our soldiers that I seem to see, of those quiet, uncomplaining heroes who more than any other have suffered from the winter's snows.

I see them at daybreak in their far-off trenches, gazing at the sun that each morning rises a little earlier to announce to them that cold and frost and endless night will soon be a thing of the past. I see their eyes that have that special expression of those who are accustomed to watch, who are closely acquainted with danger, who have buried many a comrade and who have overcome every fear. Steady eyes, like the eyes of eagles, accustomed to contemplate horizons a great way off.

What is he thinking of, that silent sentry leaning on his gun ? Was he perhaps in happier days a shepherd faithfully guarding his flock ? Or was he a peaceful labourer who at dusk returned to the children he loved ? Has he a vision of his village where his cottage lies hidden beneath fruit trees just bursting into bud

? Is it perchance in a far-off region which the enemy has overrun, and as he looks at the sun rising over the mountain, is he wondering who has care of those he left unprotected, who feeds them, who clothes them, who dries their tears ? Perhaps he has an old, old mother who each evening comes out to sit on her doorstep in the vague hope of seeing him come back. Spring is coming ! Who will till his field, sow his maize, feed his oxen ? Who will tread the path leading to his home, who will knock at his door ? Spring is coming ! The woods will soon be full of tiny blue flowers which his children will gather into bunches, but the flowers will wither, for the village is deserted, no one is passing that way.

Spring is coming ! And still other faces do I see turned towards its growing light and the hope that it brings. These are also the faces of soldiers, but thin, emaciated, pale as death, the faces of those who have stood every hardship and who after long weeks of illness are slowly creeping back to life. These are the faces with which I am best acquainted, which I have hunted up in desolate corners where many dread to go, faces over which I have bent in place of the old, old mother who every evening on her doorstep patiently waits in vain.

With parched lips these lonely sufferers have spoken to me about their homes, about their children, about the wives they long to see. They have clung to my hands and kissed them, they have called me “ mother,” begging for tidings of their loved ones, begging for consolation— begging for hope. And I have endeavoured to comfort them, feeling that my words had more^meaning when the sun shone brightly without.

\* \* \* \*

Over there it is also spring-time ! Over there in the regions we have lost. The sun will be shining, the birds will be singing as though no mighty spirit of Death had passed over the earth.

Yet over there ! In spite of sunshine and the calling voices of

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spring, this year our Roumanian soil will have a tragic awakening—our blessed Roumanian soil ! When the plough of the stranger will tear it asunder, forcing it to bring forth fruit for the hated foe, a cry of anguish will rise from its depth, a cry of protest, a cry of despair, and its banished children will hear it and understand its meaning ! Their hearts will thrill with the holy desire to free it from bondage, to save it from the humiliation of having to give forth its riches to feed those who torture its women, starve its children, bum its villages and cast a shadow over its name.

Yet, indeed, blessed art thou, oh Roumanian soil! Thy bounteousness has no limit ; like an all-loving mother dost thou give, and art always ready to give again ; the smallest seed entrusted to thy bosom, a hundredfold brings forth its fruit, and if thy weeds are nearly as plenteous as thy flowers, it is just because thy generosity is so great.

Have no fear, oh soil of Roumania ! Thy children will come and free thee from thy chains ! It is the message they send thee with the awakening voices of spring !

They will not weaken, they will not tremble before the struggle that still has to be. Deeply hast thou drunk of their blood, but they are ready that deeply thou shouldst drink again if with the sacrifice of their lives, they can buy back thy freedom and drive the enemy away from the land !

And if it were not to free the living that thy children would come, it would be to free the dead, it would be to free thy graves—thy many uncounted graves.

Never shall we know where they all lie, those brave sons of thine who by thousands have died. We can only pray that thou shouldst not weigh too heavily upon them and that within thy bosom their rest should be sweet.

Far and wide, scattered in all four comers of the land, silent and uncomplaining, they lie in graves that are marked by no

crosses, in places that have no names.

They lie waiting, and they are not impatient, so sure are they that we shall come back.

When I was young, quite young, a beautiful dream did I cherish : I dreamed of planting gardens wherever I went, wishing that nothing but flowers should mark the places where I had passed. As I grew older that dear dream vanished with many vanishing dreams, reality called me and few gardens had I leisure to plant.

Now, should I ever return, it would be upon those nameless graves that I would sow my flowers, upon those thousands and thousands of graves where our heroes lie hearkening for the tramp of our returning armies: those would then be my gardens, my holy gardens—the gardens I would love.

Like my other dream, this dream may never come true—but as this year I am a helpless exile, I think that perhaps God himself will remember our dead and sow flowers on their graves !

Spring is coming ! Therefore surely, surely will God sow His own flowers upon the graves of our dead.





## CHAPTER VIII

### ACROSS THE BARRIER

Whatever they may tell you, believe that one fights with cannon as with fists ; when once the fire is begun the least want of ammunition renders what you have already done useless.—*Napoleon.*

The riches of a State I take to be the number, fidelity and affection of its Allies.—*Demosthenes.*

**R**OUMANIA'S declaration of war was presented to the Austrian Government in Vienna at eight o'clock on Sunday evening, August 27th, "1916.

The same hour saw the twilight of a wonderful summer day falling softly over the woods and mountains among which lies Sinaia, the beautiful country resort of the Court, and the diplomatic and social world of Bucharest. Lying under the shadow of Mount Sinaia, among the woods, streams and verdant valleys, kneedeep in wildflowers, it is one of the most beautiful spots in Eastern Europe. Round the old Greek Orthodox monastery, built by Michael Cantacuzene in the fifteenth century, and its magnificent Byzantine church, a modern town of beautiful villas and country estates has grown up. A little below the monastery stands the stately Royal Palace, Castel Pelesh, with its magnificent background of woods and lofty mountain-peaks, and its rare collection of pictures and treasures within.

The gay crowd had spent the day in eager anticipation and discussion of the rumour that a momentous decision 159 i60 ROUMANIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY had been taken. Mothers with fighting sons spoke little, carrying brave faces and anxious eyes; the men, eager and excited, talked fast and

furiously as they dined in the fine villas, listened to the music, played bridge, or gambled in the gay little Casino.

Suddenly the roar of cannon broke the stillness of the mountain air, wrecking the gay chatter and laughter of the room and causing that terrible throb of excitement, that fluttering of the heart which presages the great moments of destiny. Boom—boom !—the dull roar sounded from the Carpathian ranges only fifteen miles away. . . . Boom—boom !—they echoed . . . and reechoed fainter in the rocky gorges and glens beyond !

Within an hour the ominous thunder had changed the bright frivolity of the gay world to a scene of hurried, feverish, anxious preparation and flight to Bucharest. Carriages, motors, carts, piled up with valuables and packed with people rolled down the winding roads from the hills to the plains and on to the capital.

The station was soon a jostling mass of people, who crowded on to the trains like swarming bees; lying on the roofs of the carriages, sitting on the steps, on the buffers, on any ledge to which they could cling. Villas were hurriedly closed, and precious things that could not be taken away were buried in the gardens. Only the gamblers still lingered round the green tables, reluctant to leave the magnetism of the ball of chance for the mighty ball of war that had already begun to spin, and the croupier was even now raking in his harvest of carnage and death.

All through the night energetic workers were hurriedly converting the Casino, and other buildings in this *ville*

*de -plaisir et de beaui*e, one of Europe's beauty spots, into Red Cross hospitals for the reception of the wounded. . . .

All through the night the long trains rumbled through the valley to the frontier, packed with troops. . . . All through the night the mountains reverberated to the mighty diapason of the guns, echoing to the distant peaks and valleys far away, rousing all Roumania to the great call: To Arms ! To Arms !

For Roumania had decided in favour of an advance into Transylvania, which stood a vast salient into territory for the liberation of which she had taken up arms. By the early hours of the morning several of the Carpathian passes were already in the hands of the Roumanian army and an energetic offensive was in progress.

\* \* \* \*

The time has not yet arrived to discuss the political and diplomatic reasons which determined the moment of Roumania's intervention, but one can assume that intervention had become a military necessity as much for the cause of the Allies as for her own security.

The decision to enter Transylvania—the real aim and object of her intervention—was no doubt akin to the original ardent desire of the French in August, 1914—to reclaim Alsace and Lorraine, and the national and sentimental aims of Roumania counted for much in the decision.

As to the wisdom of the decision (that governed the Roumanian General Staff in launching the Transylvanian offensive), Roumania hoped, like the rest of the Allies, that Brussiloff's offensive would go far. In the Bukovina, on her North-Eastern frontier, Lechitsky's armies had been greatly reduced, and the Central Powers were mass- M

162 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY ing forces for a vigorous offensive. Roumania realized that if this offensive proved successful and the army of Brussilof's left was turned, that the road to Bessarabia would be open to the Germans, and Roumania, isolated and cut off from Russia, would be at the mercy of the " chivalrous and honourable " Central Powers, without having struck a blow.

Added to this, the recent disclosures of the Machiavellian plans of the Russian pro-German Stuermer Government in Petrograd have demonstrated beyond question, that what almost amounted to an ultimatum was despatched by Russia to the Roumanian Government, insisting on their intervention and an offensive on the Transylvanian frontier.

Some Western critics were strongly of opinion that her true strategy at the opening of hostilities was to strike south, and cut the communications between the Central Powers and their Eastern Allies, Bulgaria and Turkey. *Had she been fully assured of complete support* and been able to avail herself of forces larger and better equipped than she actually possessed, she might have been able to accomplish this with the probable effect of shortening the war. But indeed her resources and small army could not have permitted her *alone to undertake this alternative strategical plan of* crossing the Danube, marching to Sofia, and cutting the line of communication between Berlin and Constantinople.

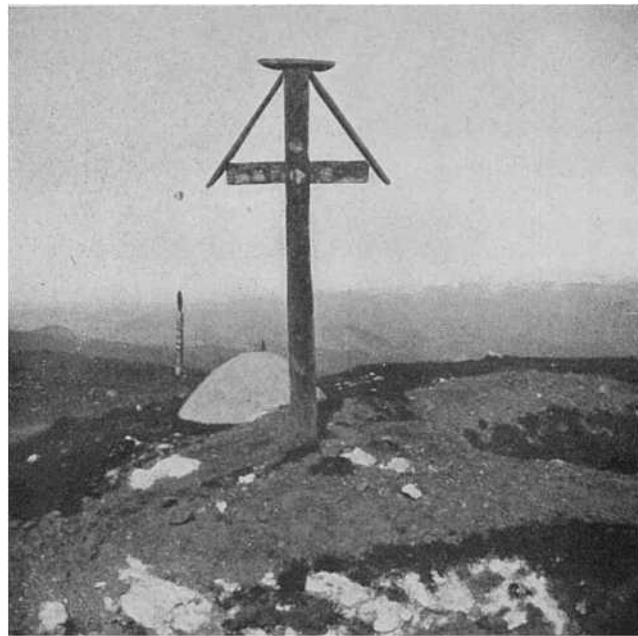
She certainly had assurances of support from Salonica, but they did not materialize. Russia, though promising her two hundred thousand men, never sent any till weeks afterwards, and she had neither the forces nor artillery sufficient to hold the immensely long line of her Car-



**SOLDIER WITH VIOLIN MARCHING AT THE HEAD OF HIS COMPANY.**



**PRIESTS OUTSIDE AN OLD MONASTERY.**



**CROSS ON A LONELY WIND-SWEPT HEIGHT.**

pathian frontier and its many passes, while alone she embarked in adventures south.

As regards the Dobrudja or Danubian frontier facing Bulgaria, Russia had assured her that there was little to fear from Bulgaria, as the latter would never be willing to fight against her Slav mother Russia.

It seems incredible that anyone could have put faith in the traitorous character of the Bulgarian, or in the crafty scheming fox who occupies the throne, and who was using the negotiations between his Government and the Roumanian Minister at Sofia regarding neutrality as a pretence to gain time for his attack, using these diplomatic manoeuvres in true Teutonic style as a cloak to conceal the dagger beneath.

But the Prime Minister Bratianu, strange to say, did not believe in the duplicity of the Bulgarian Government, and thought it possible to avoid war. Thus a grave political miscalculation determined the course of the campaign.

The element of surprise counted considerably in the first great successes for the Roumanian Army. She was able to throw her forces well over the Carpathians, crossing at eighteen points, and to penetrate deep into the enemy's country before the latter could assemble in force, even had the latter had at her disposal sufficient men and material to release from her other fronts for this purpose—a condition the Allies did not believe to be possible. Of the four Roumanian armies, the third, under General Aslan, was left to watch the Bulgarian frontier, while the other three—the first, under General Culcer ; the second, under General Averescu, and the fourth, under General Presân—were to operate on the Carpathians.

During the first few weeks the Roumanians made a

164 ROUMANIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY rapid advance, all opposition being overcome. The Central Powers had been taken by surprise, and had as yet no time to bring up reinforcements to arrest the victorious march forward, since the elan of the Roumanian troops was at its highest, fighting as they were now on what was once their own territory, and where their kinsmen are held under the iron hand of the Magyar.

The Czech regiments sent to oppose these Roumanian units simply walked right over to them, so glad were they to join those fighting against the Magyar tyrants— “ The Prussians ” of the Dual Monarchy ; and indeed as a Deputy said in the Hungarian Parliament, “ they just disappeared without anyone being able to say where they went ! ”

The Tomos, the Tolgyes and the Rothen Turm passes were in turn forced, the railways and frontier towns occupied, and the Roumanian Army was debouching into the wide country of rolling hills and valleys—the well-loved land—while Hermanns!adt was being menaced.

It was a triumphant success, and the hopes of the little nation beat high. But their slender forces, in a country both mountainous and difficult and covering a frontier of no less than three hundred miles, were widely separated, making it hard to establish communications. It must be remembered they had not yet reached the river Maros, which in itself would have given them a position of comparative security.

The enemy meanwhile with furious energy and aided by his splendid railway system was preparing a deadly counter-stroke, of which the Roumanians with their limited and scattered aeroplane service were unable to gauge either the extent or full importance.



It was at this moment that the risky nature of the strategic plan began to make itself felt. Bulgaria had held her hand until Mackensen, who was in the Balkan area, had been able to make his military preparations and assume command of the armies on the Bulgarian frontier. Within five days of Roumania's declaration the Slav Judas, Ferdinand of Coburg, ruler of Bulgaria, had once again sold his honour and declared war on Roumania and on his country's liberator Russia. General Jostoff, the Chief of the Bulgarian Staff, a man of patriotism and honour, who was strongly opposed to the German domination of his country, was, following the notorious Enver Bey tradition, 'removed,' his body being found riddled with bullets. Such indeed are the rewards for men of this stamp in countries where Germany teaches 'Kultur' !

\* \* \* \*

Mackensen was the first to strike. Massing his troops with great speed he fell on the scattered Roumanian forces defending the fortresses of Turtukai, and Silistria in the Dobrudja, the reduction of which would open the way for a quick advance to the great bridge and railway over the Danube at Cernavoda, linking the port of Constanza with the capital. Turtukai, though defended by fortifications, had been left with a very inadequate number of troops. The utmost gallantry was displayed by the defenders, who were seriously handicapped and at a most serious disadvantage on account of a superiority in men and guns which the enemy possessed. Though vigorously contesting every inch of ground under the most terrific fire, and repulsing the enemy again and again, they were eventually overwhelmed, and the fortress fell on the

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6th September, just ten days after Roumania's entering into the war.

This was a very serious reverse for Roumania, as the fortress covered the crossing of the Danube. On the Bulgarian side the river bank stands high, dominating the low Roumanian bank opposite, and the advance from this point to the capital is only thirty miles. As a consequence of the fall of the fortress of Turtukai, the evacuation of Silistria, a little further to the east, was decided on, on the ground that the garrison being insufficient would have merely fallen into a trap. The loss of these two important fortresses, within two weeks of the opening of the war, was a disastrous check, and placed a very anxious aspect on one portion of the campaign.

Meanwhile the Transylvanian armies had been weakened by the transference of some of their not too abundant forces for the defence of the Dobrudja, and the withdrawal of General Averescu, the ablest of their Generals, to command the army there, which now found themselves involved in serious difficulty.

As already stated, Roumania's equipment was inadequate for a war which she had hoped to limit to the Central Powers alone, but which had now developed into one against four nations, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey, all combining to surround and crush our gallant little Ally, who was still awaiting the promised artillery and support from Russia. Guns, machine guns, aeroplanes, field telephones, rifles, etc., were alike lacking to meet the wants of the long line of thirteen hundred kilometres on which she was conducting two campaigns simultaneously, and to combat the gigantic fighting

machine elaborated by the enemy during two years of war and continual experience.

The Roumanian army consisting of only *sixteen* divisions was now having to face *thirty-seven* divisions, accompanied by an overwhelmingly superior armament, *twenty divisions of which belonged to the elite of the German Army*.

Roumania's two years of neutrality had not availed her much, for the Powers, uncertain as to her decision, would not assist her with supplies, and it was only by the long, roundabout way through Russia with its interminable delays and demoralization that she could get any munitions at all. Furthermore, the hopes she had built on the promises of a steady flow of these from Russia were not fulfilled. The treacherous pro-German Stuermer Government at Petrograd held up supplies and absolutely vital necessities, with the consequence that the brave little nation, cruelly isolated in this distant comer of Europe, was for the most part left alone to meet the combined attack of the four Powers.

With Turtukai and Silistria in German hands, Mac-kensen's aim was now to push on to the great Carol Bridge at Cernavoda (which means Black Water), the only bridge over the Lower Danube for a distance of six hundred miles. By capturing it and the railway across it, he would sever Roumanian access to the Black Sea, as well as cut through Russia's road to the Balkans. The bridge is one of the longest in the world, and counting the causeways is twelve miles long and cost £1,500,000 to build. The railway was built in 1882 under Turkish rule, by an English company, and cuts through the wonderful old wall of Trajan at several points.

The greater part of the Russian 47th Army Corps and the Serbian division were now supporting the Roumanians in the Dobrudja, the whole under the command of the Russian General Zayonchovski, the Serbian division being composed of Jugo-Slavs forced to fight in the Austro-Hungarian Army and taken prisoners by the Russians. These soldiers were a splendid lot, and begged to be allowed to fight on the side of the Allies and to strike a blow for their kinsmen. They fought with a stubborn tenacity all through the campaign, winning the admiration of both Allies and enemy alike.

Mackensen, even with his war experience and superior troops, vastly superior artillery, and aeroplane service, which gave him inestimable advantage over the Roumanian forces who were practically without 'eyes,' encountered the fiercest opposition. The defenders contested his advance with the greatest pugnacity and valour. Even the German report admitted that "fierce and fluctuating battles have taken place, the enemy defending himself with great stubbornness." So much indeed was this the case that they were able to inflict serious reverses on the enemy at Kara Orman, where they lost eight guns and a high-born officer, Prince Henry of Bavaria, nephew of the King, and drove the invading armies back in complete confusion; and Mackensen's boast of the "crowning mercy" that was to be his—the Cernavoda bridge—was still out of reach.

A propos of the death of this Prince, it is said that just before he expired, conscious that his death was not as that of other men, he murmured, "*Noblesse oblige*." These words were applauded by the German nation, who overlooked the fact that they were the last words spoken by

a scion of a Royal German House, and were those of their traditional but always chivalrous foe, France.<sup>1</sup>

The Roumanians, unable to bring up sufficient reinforcements, were too exhausted to pursue their successes. All through October battles swayed, alternately success coming first to one side, then to the other, the Roumanians fighting with fury and desperation to arrest the enemy advance on their port of Constanza.

Their forces were still further depleted by some divisions being withdrawn to the Carpathians, where the passes were being seriously threatened. Towards the end of September Mackensen, strongly reinforced by Turkish and Bulgar divisions, was able to seize his advantage, and after a fierce resistance to cut the connection between Cernavoda and Constanza, the latter coming within range of the German guns and unable to be held. The Roumanian troops withdrew under cover of the fire of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea, and amid a wild storm of wind and rain the Bulgars entered the city. Everything had been destroyed, including The great stores of grain and oil, and the enemy found little beyond some hundreds of empty railway trucks and a few locomotives. By this Roumania lost her only seaport and the principal lines of communication with Russia were cut.

The Transylvanian campaign had been launched on the assumption of surprise, and unpreparedness on the part of the enemy. An historian has described it as a “gamble between two conditions of unpreparedness,” in view of the political conditions and the poor equipment of the Roumanian Army for the heavy tasks awaiting her. Austria had, however, the luck to hold the better

<sup>1</sup> *The Times History of the War.*

170 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY card.  
Thanks to her splendid system of strategic railways, her Ally, Germany, was able to summon to her support large forces from Verdun, the Somme, and the Riga fronts, while Turkish and Bulgarian hordes rolled up from the south on the brave but unfortunate little country, which found it could count but little on the promised assistance from Russia.

The forces arrayed against her consisted of over nine hundred thousand war-seasoned troops, picked Bavarian Alpine corps—sturdy highlanders accustomed to mountain warfare—and a great mass of artillery, the whole under the command of General von Falkenhayn. The Roumanian forces were depleted by having to send several divisions to the Dobrudja. They were short of big guns and had no experience of mountain warfare, for since the outbreak of war in 1914 they had been unable to practise manoeuvres there for fear that they might excite the apprehension of the Central Powers and have them misconstrued by them as a threat.

\* \* \* \*

The early days in October saw the great German offensive in the Carpathians launched. Brussilof's advance in Galicia had been checked, and the ill success on his left wing was soon to be followed by disastrous consequences for the Roumanian offensive. Supported by an overwhelming preponderance of artillery the Austro-German command delivered blow after blow with deadly effect.

The Roumanians fighting desperately reeled under the titanic onslaught of massed guns and superior forces and were forced to retreat towards the passes. Slowly, bit by bit, all the ground they had won had to be given up, and soon the fifteen thousand prisoners that they had

taken and their depleted forces were all that remained to them of the great adventure.

In the rocky gorges and precipitous roads of the Carpathian passes she braced herself sternly for a desperate defensive. Amid the blaze of colour, the glorious beauty of early autumn, a fierce resistance took place in the narrow defiles, defended as strongly as the slender resources of the Roumanians allowed.

The mountain peaks 7000 and 8000 feet high, no longer solitary and silent, the haunt of the bear, chamois and eagle, were echoing to the deep thunder of the guns, the shrill screaming of the shells.

The aeroplanes—the cavalry of the clouds—with droning purr, were contesting the lonely heights and the supremacy of the air with the king of birds. Deep roars resounded through the ravines as the furious onslaught of artillery dislodged great rocks, which, riven and rent, crashed down the heights to the depths of the defiles.

The sunny warm-scented pastures of the lower slopes where the bees droned, the sheep browsed, the little *'pastor* fluted his plaintive melody so short a while ago, was tom and desolated now by the remorseless fury of the shells.

Death and destruction were stalking hand in hand, and many a mother's son lay grim and distorted under the benediction of the eternal hills.

High up on the ledges of the narrow defiles ran the steep winding roads on which the Austrian high-explosive shells were blasting their way ; hundreds of feet below brawled the streams.

Again and yet again the valorous Roumanians wrested success from the enemy and drove him back. In the Jiu

1^2 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY valley they inflicted a crushing and humiliating defeat on those fiercest of Teuton fighters, the Bavarians, who fled in utter rout ; like the Irishman who thought it was better to be a coward for five minutes than to be dead for the rest of his life 1 They left immense stores behind them, only snatching time to shoot 1300 of their horses, which they hastily buried in a gigantic funeral mound before escaping on foot through the ravines. General Drăgălina, one of Roumania's exiled sons from Transylvania and a most daring and capable commander, was severely wounded here and succumbed later to his injuries. He was a brave, strong personality and greatly beloved by his men.

But these and other brilliant counter-offensives of the gallant little Roumanian Army could not stem the onward sweep of the Teutonic hosts, who had burst through the mountain passes and were pouring into the wide rich plains of Wallachia, this treasure land of grain in Eastern Europe.

Roumania had hardly faced the disastrous fall of Constanza and the Cernavoda bridge when the rude shock of the fall of Craiova, the chief town of Oltenia, "the millionaires' city " as it was called, forced them to realize the imminent peril of the nation.

\* \* \* \*

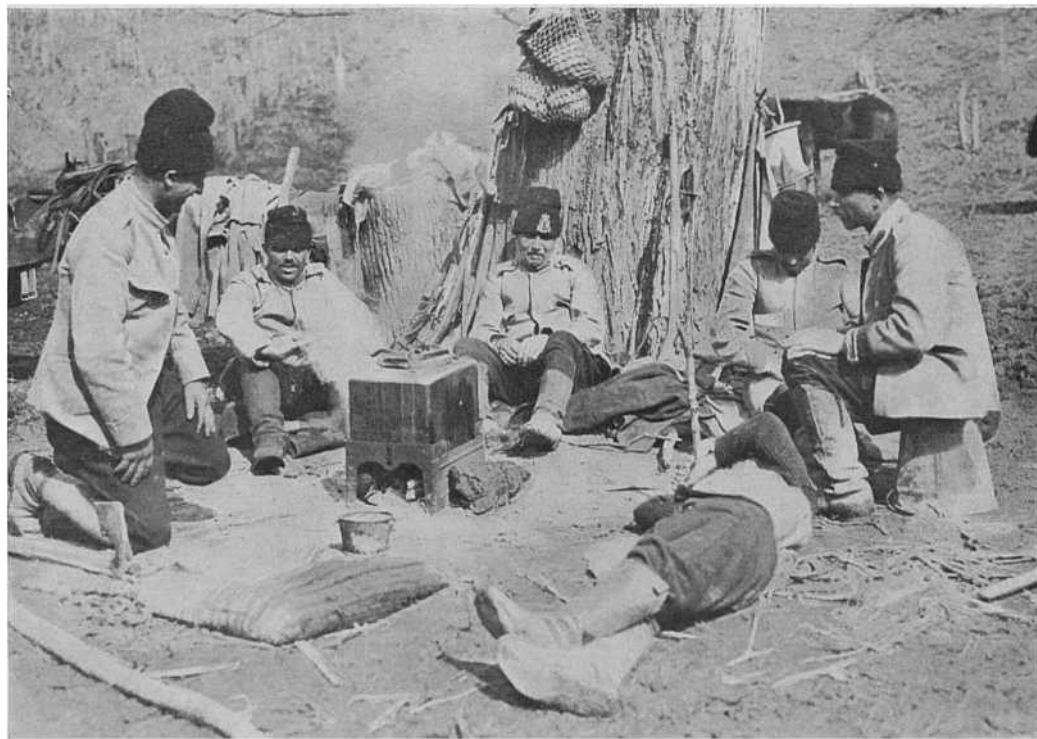
By the end of November the Austro-German, Bulgar and Turkish armies were closing in on Bucharest. Outgunned, outmanned, the splendid peasant soldiers of our Ally rose to the crisis with the true spirit of soldiers, defending their country with desperation, and as the German reports admit, " with unsparing energy."

The small Orșova group stubbornly holding on to its





**CHARACTERISTIC ROMANIAN PEASANT TRANSPORT.**



**IN THE REST CAMP.**

positions at the Iron Gates of the Danube was left far behind, as the main Roumanian Army retreated, and found itself in the rear of the advancing enemy forces. Completely cut off and isolated from the main army, this valiant detachment of seven thousand men under General Anastasiu, stubbornly fighting, tried to escape the doom that they knew was certain. But they resolved to sell their lives dearly, harrying unceasingly the rear troops of the enemy forces and menacing their transport traffic on the Danube.

This wonderful retreat lasted three weeks, and so courageously and determinedly did they fight to the last that they even earned the praise and admiration of the enemy, who reported that “ amidst continuous fighting and delivering repeated counter-attacks the Orșova group withdrew slowly to the south-east, constantly resisting and fighting for the honour of its arms.”

Decimated and lacking in everything but their superb courage and daring which resisted to the bitter end, the gallant remnant, under its heroic General Anastasiu, were forced to surrender at Caracal two days after the fall of Bucharest.

Meanwhile on the Danube frontier Mackensen had been able to force a crossing at Giurgevo and was now marching northwards to co-operate with the armies advancing from the west under Falkenhayn, the objective being to close in on the capital.

Whilst destroying Giurgevo, the Bulgarian forces under his command gave full rein to the hatred and savagery of their dour natures. In a few hours nothing was left of the once prosperous little town but scenes of wanton destruction and piles of gruesome corpses—old men,

174 ROUMANIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY women, children, girls ! What the flames did not spare was wrecked by the fury of these heartless brutes, who in the way of the *furor teutonicus* of their predatory masters had nothing to learn, and in the matter of murder, rape and savagery could even give them points. They were well aware of Germany's order that " Roumania should pay in full the expenses of her invasion."

The Austrian Socialist and Labour paper the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, crowing with satisfaction over the misery of the devastated peasantry, remarked :—

" Our troops could not possibly have marched at this rate had not Roumania so much cattle, so many geese, pigs and poultry. The Wallachian plain is covered with thriving villages very different from the poor hamlets in the mountains on the northern border of the country. The invading forces live here in great style."

The extreme gravity of the moment was incontestable. General Averescu, now in supreme command of the Roumanian Army, gathered together all the forces he could muster for a last stand on the River Argesh and a decisive battle, on which the fate of Bucharest would depend.

It was now that the soldiers of the Czar—two divisions, a small part of the long-promised help—made their first appearance in Wallachia, although this was three months after the commencement of hostilities, at a time when the little nation was mourning the tragic loss of more than half her kingdom. Bleeding and exhausted, she was facing a formidable foe flushed and exalted with success, and supported by a crushing preponderance of both artillery and men.

The narrow line of the river Argesh, on which Averescu

was giving battle, presented no formidable obstacle, being not much more than a wide ditch. Nevertheless, General Presan delivered a counter-stroke in the hope of driving a wedge between the army of Mackensen and the German centre under Kiihne. Within an ace of achieving his purpose he repulsed the enemy, throwing him across the river Neaylovic and defeating the Turkish division as well as the main body of German-Bulgarian iroops, resulting in the capture of fifty guns and some thousands of prisoners.

But success was dashed from his grasp, for espionage was rampant, and the whole place infested with German civilians domiciled in the country, of whom fifty, disguised in Russian uniform, were arrested, tried and shot in one day.

General Presân, desperately pressed and anxiously awaiting the expected reinforcements which were purposely delayed through the culpable negligence of a subordinate officer, found treachery on every side. General Socec—a naturalized German whose real name was Sosek—commanding a division, left his post at night at nine o'clock without authority, and, in the midst of this supreme crisis, went to Bucharest. The position occupied by his troops was attacked by the enemy at 9.30, the line was pierced—General Presân's at one time victory was turned into a crushing defeat of the Roumanian armies—and the way to the capital lay open !

## CHAPTER IX

### WRECKING A NATION'S WEALTH

**W**HILE the city was being invested and its destiny decided on the Argesh, a section of von Falkenhayn's army was sweeping forward like a great flock of vultures to the rich prey they expected to find at Ploesti, the centre of the immensely rich oil region of Roumania.

There in the valleys of the Prahova, Dimbovitza, of Teleajen and Buzău the earth sweats through the pores of the soil the surplus blood from her vast arteries. Covetously, with hungry eyes eager for the prize, the Germans were quickly advancing counting on the rich spoil they would find in the great store of oil, petrol and benzine of which they were so desperately in need.

As was the case in the destruction of their great grain store at Constantza, and Braila, an instant and quick decision had to be taken by the Roumanian Government.

The British Government had sent out Colonel Sir John Norton Griffiths, D.S.O., a well-known engineer and member of Parliament, a man of great energy and determination, to aid and advise them in this crisis. For Roumania it was a stern and tragic decision to take, and nothing but the supreme gravity of the moment could have justified it, forced upon them as it was by the relentless advance of the enemy.

It was a terrible and heart-breaking undertaking to have to deliberately sanction the destruction of a vast industry, and never perhaps in the history of the world has there been an act of self-sacrifice so moving as the immolation of a country's treasure at the height of its prosperity on the altar of dire and tragic necessity, while her people starved and cried for bread.

But the exigencies of the situation demanded it, and as Vandervelde has said, "to destroy war it is necessary to carry war to its logical conclusion."

The Government had given orders that all the workmen employed there, young and old, without distinction of nationality, were to be evacuated, so that no one capable of repairing the wells should fall into the hands of the enemy. Village after village poured out, the workmen with their wives and children, swelling the already mighty stream of refugees on the road to Braila, Focsani or Galatz, industrial centres as yet not in the hands of the enemy. For the whole district had to be emptied of its human burden before fire and devastation could work their ill-fated will.

It must have been like some grim nightmare, some ghastly picture of a distorted mind, those bitter days of early winter, when a whole countryside was turned into the roads homeless and in flight ! Scenes poignant in their sacrifice but which had to be accomplished, however cruel, however desperate, in order to spare the little country further sufferings at the hands of a boastful, replenished and enriched conqueror.

As Hamilton Fyfe has said :—

"Destruction of that which has been created by man's energy for the satisfaction of the world's needs, of that 178  
ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY which provides profit and wage for hundreds of thousands of people, and so enables them to live, must be a hideous, saddening spectacle.

That the wrecking was beyond all question necessary made the case no better. It added to it a horrid irony. We were forced to defend ourselves against barbarians by barbarous means. To leave the oil-wells untouched would have been a crime. The Germans and their dupes need lubricants very badly. These were the only oil-fields from which they could get them in any quantity. They would have benefited by the products of the Roumanian wells for as long as they occupied the oil region. Then they would have destroyed the industry themselves so as to prevent the Alfies from making use of it.

“ It was therefore an urgent matter, when the enemy flood came pouring over the Roumanian plain sweeping the Roumanian Army before it, to set about destruction with vigour.”

Sir John Norton Griffiths, aided by several Britishers resident in the country, and connected with the oilfields, who, dressed in khaki, were given temporary commissions in the army, and supported by the overseers and engineers, worked like veritable demons. If they were to be destroyed, then they must be so completely wrecked that the Germans could not hope to repair or utilize them for years.

One by one the valleys which formerly had been hives of industry and movement were invaded by the wreckers. “ The man with the sledge-hammer,” as Sir John was called, his muscular arms, his athletic frame working like a Titan, led the way showing them how to wreck the derricks and pipes. The big hammer swung round his

WRECKING A NATION’S WEALTH 179 head in a fury of energy, as he struck blow after blow that Vulcan himself might have envied for strength and precision, till everything was a tangled and terrible ruin.

Then with torches or bundles of straw he and his energetic helpers would rush to the big reservoirs and cisterns—lakes of



petrol and benzine—to set them alight. Oblivious of danger or fatigue, valley after valley was destroyed, houses and villages wiped out, and millions of pounds were swept away every hour.

The enemy was so close on their heels that the work of destruction had to be effected with the utmost speed. The benzine and petrol was poured through the open sluices and pipes until it flooded the factories and ground to a depth of several feet. Into this were hurled machinery tools, dynamos, after having been first smashed to pieces.

A lighted match or straw was cast into this flooded area, and as the workmen saw all that they had built with so much care—at so much cost—flare into a roaring furnace they would smile bitterly as they murmured, “ Here’s another the devils won’t get.”

It was a dangerous job and many of them were burnt by the inflammable air which caught fire and hung round in gassy clouds. But they stuck to it with extraordinary determination. The valves and cocks of the cisterns were turned on, allowing the precious oil and other products to flood the earthen embankments around the tanks, which were then set on fire, and vitriol was run into the steam and oil boilers in order to render them completely useless. The pump station was also flooded with oil and benzine, then burnt, the flames rising like great leaping i8o ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY tongues nearly four hundred feet high—a panorama of magnificent horror! The tortured leaping flames, the towering columns of dense black smoke rolling skywards!

The huge tanks, exploding with a roar, were hurled a distance of over one hundred yards, ploughing up the ground in great rents, while on all sides resounded the shattering thunder of the derricks and cranes as they crashed to the ground.

The deep pipes which drew up the petrol and precious oils from the depths of the earth, many of them 900 to 2 000 feet in depth and of a value of 90,000 francs ; others 3000 feet deep

and of 250,000 francs in value, were choked up and blocked, far, far down, by forcing scrap iron, broken chains, stones, mud, rocks, and drilling bits, thrust upside down, through the pipes, while the outlets were twisted and destroyed out of all shape and use.

One of the most dangerous points tackled was the big power house at the great Astra works. It was full of gas, and there was the possibility of its exploding at any moment. The Roumanian Commission before retiring endeavoured to persuade Sir John from undertaking such a dangerous operation as its destruction, but he would not listen to the word danger. Grasping a fuse of lighted hay he dashed into the building, setting fire to the oil in the basement, which had been previously pumped in. It was a courageous act and a miracle he was not asphyxiated—he was slightly burnt—and that the others were not killed.

One of the last things to be demolished was a huge tank, the largest in Europe, containing 10,000 tons of petrol.

#### WRECKING A NATION'S WEALTH 181

The enemy was so close and following so swiftly, anxiously hoping to be in time to stay the destruction of the coveted booty, that not a moment could be wasted ; in fact the whole work was only completed a bare hour or two before he advanced over the ground. As for the financial destruction the sum ran into many millions. A French engineer, one of those working at this terrible work, puts the bill at the following :—

	<i>Francs.</i>
Petrol, benzine, lubricant and mineral oil .	75,000,000
Refineries .....	80,000,000
Reservoirs and cisterns ....	25,000,000
Material for pipes, derricks and installations	100,000,000
Installation and pipes ....	800,000,000

1.                      080,000,000

More than seventy refineries, including the celebrated *Steaua*

and *Astra*, were destroyed and more than 80,000 waggon-loads of petrol were burnt in the reservoirs. One can understand the tragic irony of the destruction and the effect of it on the wealth of the nation when one realizes that the output of petrol in 1915 reached the figure of 1,850,000,000 tons, and that the industry, as yet only in its infancy, was worth about £6,000,000.

Over twenty millions of foreign money was invested in this great industry, and it is surmised it will require thirty millions to put the refineries again into working order.

Reservoirs containing 12,000 to 15,000 cubic metres of petrol were set alight, and the great clouds of inflammable vapour rising into the smoke-laden, darkened air exploded and darted about like huge will-o'-the-wisps, catching light here and there as it floated overhead. In 182 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY one place more than 160 great shafts were set alight and destroyed, while the gas searching underground for an outlet rumbled and roared like an imprisoned giant, till finding a sudden vent it burst upwards in a great spit of flame which belched forth earth, sand and stones, intermingled with great flares of gas.

One of these vast clouds of asphyxiating gases floated over a poor little gipsy encampment on the hillside, suffocating every soul there with the bitter poisonous fumes, while the leaping flames followed, wiping out and devouring all that was left.

The valleys were ablaze from end to end—a furnace that sent up a dense pall of black smoke that blotted out the sky, the daylight, and left nothing but a scene of frenzied Dantesque destruction and darkness. This dense black cloud enveloped Târgovistea, a town twenty-five miles away, for hours, turning day into night.

The devastated valleys—once such scenes of prosperity—bright with the sun by day, little electric lamps at night fighting so cheerfully the peaceful homes of the workers, the farms of the peasants, were silent now and dark. In the distance the

muttering thunder of the guns throbbed heavily through the smoke-laden air and, from out the ruin and desolation around, the broken chimney-stacks stood up tall and gaunt, like weird tombstones, in this smoking necropolis of a dead industry.

The enemy advancing rapidly by forced marches, had before his furious and disappointed gaze the great smoke and flame riven sky, betokening the destruction of what he so ardently desired. Like Moses, a pillar of smoke

WRECKING A NATION'S WEALTH 183 was in front of them by day, a pillar of fire at night. Their utmost endeavours to reach the scene and stop the destruction was ever frustrated. The pillar was always menacingly ahead ! And nothing but a blackened desolate and reeking land greeted them in mockery and bitterness.

## CHAPTER X

### THE VIA DOLOROSA

I heard a voice that cried, " Make way for those who died," And  
all the coloured crowd like ghosts at morning fled ; And down  
the waiting road rank after rank there strode In mute and  
measured march a hundred thousand men. Like desolate stars  
they shone one moment and were gone, And I sank down and put  
my hand across my head And felt them moving past, nor looked  
to see the last In steady silent march, one hundred thousand dead.

*J. C. Squire.*

ND Bucharest ! the city of pleasure, the gay / % little capital!

Vanished are her smiles, the / % dimples are gone.

Squaring her shoulders, looking fate bravely in  
the face, she braced herself for the worst. A silence had fallen  
on the gay clatter of the city, the streets were empty, a sense of  
impending predestined fate hung over everything like a pall  
during those terrible days of foreboding, those throbbing hours  
of fear.

Her children watched the relentless march of events with  
strained and anxious eyes ; with sinking hearts they saw the  
enemy advancing swiftly, piercing deeper and ever deeper into  
the heart of their land.

Wild is the music of autumnal winds amongst the faded trees.  
Wilder still the moaning winds of winter. The whistling of the  
shells . . . the thunder of the great guns . . . as in a slowly  
increasing crescendo of fury they drive the terrified peasants  
towards the capital, like leaves before a hurricane.



They have left all that means life and happiness and home behind—their men, their sons—bleeding and dying in that hell of fire. Their little homes built up with such patient labour and self-sacrifice, the cattle, the sheep, the dear personal possessions, the grandparents too feeble to fly—who refused to go !

The feverish departure, the hastily packed bundles, the trembling fingers, the eyes blinded with tears that turned for a last look, carrying the merflory of the beloved home. The old people standing on the doorstep waving a trembling farewell, the burning villages on the horizon, the crying children, the babe at her breast.

The long grey roads leading to the capital are packed with hurrying fugitives. Too tired, too anxious to speak they hurry along. Great bullock transport wagons creak slowly by, the stately calm-eyed oxen moving with the same slow dignity as in days of peace and leisure. A dark line moves sinuously along in the bleak dusk. Quick, eager-eyed a regiment of infantry passes. With set faces they march rapidly towards the west. With a dry sob the women thrust out their hands to them in passing, murmuring huskily, “ God be with you.” The trees stand out bare and leafless, lifting gaunt arms to a leaden sky!

Surely, surely the Russians are coming to help ! The gallant Roumanian Army fighting with such desperate devotion will get the help, the guns, the men in time ? Surely then the *Neamtzi*<sup>1</sup> will be stayed ?

Darkness and cold—the wind is whistling drearily ; rain mixed with sleet is falling ; the little ones, crying and hungry, drag at the mother’s skirt. Where shall we sleep to-night ?

<sup>1</sup> Contemptuous term for the hated German.

What does the future hold ?

Dear Mother of Christ, how wet, how cold we are —and tired.

My man, my man ! where is he now ?

Shall we ever get to the city—another ten miles ! Oh, the whimpering little ones.

\* \* \* \*

In the city a fever of unrest prevailed. One moment the brilliant heroism of the gallant, dwindling Roumanian Army would succeed in arresting the merciless advance of the enemy for a few days and the spirits of the people would bound upwards with hope, only to be cast down again with the news of further disasters.

The consulates were besieged with people trying to get their passports. The rich were sending their families northwards and thousands of fugitives were crowding into the city. Prices were soaring and the excitement was intense.

The Government had taken resolute means to prevent espionage or news leaking out, but the capital was full of Hungarians and Germans settled in business, as well as paid German secret agents, and was a veritable rabbit warren of intrigue. Several hundred German clerks had been interned on the declaration of war, but it was found that the banks and some of the important business houses could not be carried on without them. They were therefore released, and as can be well imagined, made ample use of their liberty for espionage. They stood about the corners of the streets in groups, insolent and sneering, discussing in vainglorious terms the successes of their armies.

No letters or newspapers were received by the troops with the exception of a little news-sheet printed especially



for them. The tea-shops had all been closed. Too many wild rumours and exaggerations had emanated from them for them to be regarded as anything but mischief factories. The news of the evacuation of Constanta ; then of Craiova, the rich millionaires' town, had fallen upon their ears with a crashing insistence, and a dread premonition of what next might follow 1 Would the Army be strong enough to hold back the Colossus that was striding forward so swiftly, so vastly superior in heavy artillery and machine guns ? It was being realized that the supreme crisis was approaching and that their only hope of safety from the tragic fate that had befallen Serbia and Belgium lay in Russia remaining true to her promise, and sending them the long delayed help.

General Averescu was summarily deleting the army of the negligent and unsatisfactory officers, who as in all armies and all wars have failed to prove their worth, and commands were being given to active and energetic younger men.

Daily the city was subjected to the horrors of Zeppelin and aeroplane bombardment. They bombed the hospitals so continuously that the authorities had to erect a small camp beside them in which they interned some of the sleek, well-fed German prisoners. This proceeding, through the agency of the hundreds of German spies in the city, soon reached the ears of the enemy and caused him to desist from this especial game of hospital baiting.

They flew over the crowded courtyard of the railway station where hundreds of women and children had congregated waiting for a train to carry them north to safety. Flying very low with no anti-aircraft guns or defending aeroplanes to distract them from their dia-

i88 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY  
work, they raked the helpless crowd with their machine guns until the place was a perfect shambles of horror.

The small number of machines Roumania possessed were all needed at the front, and there were none left for the defence of the capital. She had no aircraft factories, and the only way to replenish her shattered stock was by the long round-about way of import from France or England.

Thus the little nation in this hour of dire distress was feeling the terrible loneliness of her position, isolated and away on the furthest shore of Europe. She had now only one door of entry and exit open—that through Russia. The long, long route from south to north, then through Sweden, Norway and across the submarine invested North Sea before she reached her distant allies France and England; weeks en route—and Sweden, as events showed later, was not strictly neutral. Indeed her Foreign Office and Minister seemed to be at the complete disposition of Germany in despatching her cipher telegrams to South America, Mexico and other neutral countries- Great difficulty was experienced in getting even Red Cross supplies passed through this neutral country whose Queen is a German.

What a malevolent, pestilential influence these German women have exercised on the countries whose thrones have had the misfortune to be occupied by them ; the one brilliant and wonderful exception during this war being the truly heroic, patriotic, and high-souled Queen of the Belgians, who though Bavarian has shown that honour, truth and justice come far before the creed of hate, cruelty, arrogance and intrigue, the cult of lies,

deception, ambiguity and hypocrisy, this lust of power, to be obtained by fair means or foul, which is the inverted religion instilled into the race from their earliest childhood.

The German Legation here, aswell as those other shameless nests of spying and intrigue, scattered over the world and which she has debased from their honourable title of Legation, was a veritable scullery where all the odious schemes and dirty work of the master chef were performed. The place was a sink of foul plans and poisonous plots hatched by members of this tainted race under the loyal protection of a nation still at peace. What scoundrels these German diplomatic ‘ gentlemen ’ can be !

As a Japanese officer said, “ What most disgusting gentleman German can make, he make a disgrace to civilization to-day. He belong to class that England call cad, and France *canaille*. ”

Here in the gardens of the Legation over one hundred boxes of explosives were dug up. Fifty contained “ Bickford cords ” with charges. In another comer of the grounds under a heap of firewood were buried other boxes ; on one, bearing in red wax the seal of the German Consulate, was the following direction : “ By King’s Messenger. Very secret 1 Not to be thrown.” Beneath this wrapper was a second, “ Very secret—by tela. To his Royal Colonel and Military Attache, His Honour Herr von ----- ” The name had been rubbed out, but traces of the letters HAM—T—IN were recognizable (Colonel von Hammerstein was the German military attache). Inside the box was a typewritten note in German to the following effect : “ Herewith four tubes for horses and four for homed cattle. For use as directed.

190 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY Each tube sufficient for two hundred head. If possible administer direct through the animals' mouths, if not, in their fodder.

“ Should be obliged for a little report on success with you. If there should be good news to report Herr K.'s presence here for a day desirable.”

In six boxes were found test-tubes filled with a yellowish liquid. These phials and the cartridges were reported by the military to be high explosives, with nitrate of ammonium and trozyl of great destructive effect. In the case of the test-tubes, the Institute of Bacteriology reported that they contained glanders and anthrax bacilli of very virulent culture.

A confidential German agent who was arrested confessed that “ still worse things ” were hidden in the Legation. One knows how successfully they were starting this greater scheme of devilish ‘ frightfulness ’ by dropping in the country districts from their aeroplanes tins of sweets for the peasants and children to find, and which contained the most virulent culture of typhoid and cholera.

The Taubes, generally in groups of five and six, would raid the city continually, sometimes six times in twenty- four hours. The houses being rarely of more than two stories high the destruction, casualties and death fists were appalling. The hospitals were filled with men, women and children, with legs and arms blown off and terrible injuries of all' sorts. The little Boy Scouts did splendid work as ambulance bearers and first-aid helpers. These brave little fellows controlled their natural terror most wonderfully, and played their part of succour in the shambles of the streets with fine courage and presence of mind.

An English lady working in one of the Bucharest hospitals gives a vivid picture of the life there.

“ To-day I drove to the hospital with Mrs. C. It was three o'clock on a lovely sunny day. We got to an open market-place, and noticed that all the people were looking up—and then, for half an hour we were really in it ! For there were six Taubes overhead, all dropping bombs.

“ We bought our cheese quite calmly in the market and drove on. As we neared the hospital, shrapnel and bombs began to fall all round. I picked up one man wounded and unconscious, and took him on with us in the motor. A woman was killed at the gate of the hospital, and another man died on the doorstep. We went in and settled down to work. We had three operations between four and seven, and were just going home when men on stretchers began to come in from the different parts of the town where bombs and shrapnel had fallen. I wired home not to expect me till they saw me, and we worked on till nearly 2.30, till all the operations were over. I've never had such a nightmare day, but we finished them all. The other hospitals were all full up, too, and the wounded were all over the town. The casualties were thirty dead and over a hundred wounded, for the streets were crowded when the Taubes came. The beasts flew round and round, hardly a quarter of the town escaped. I got home to find that A. and a lot of others had stood in the garden and watched ; five big pieces of shrapnel fell there, and yet the silly people stayed. I collected the pieces and shall have them decorated with silver bands. A. consents not to do it again, but he was so interested, and says it was such a fine sight that he couldn't resist it !

“ One couldn't be excited in the hospital, there was no time. If a doctor is cutting off things and calls out *panse- ment!* or *aqua lactea !* like a pistol at your head, you somehow find it even if you don't know what it is ! One just works without

realizing at all what one is doing. After it was all over we collapsed, and sat in the hospital model kitchen with the petrol cooking lamp and drank hot tea and *zwicka* and tried to recover. I don't feel it's over yet. We shall have the beasts before morning again ; they have only half an hour to fly for more bombs, but twice in twenty-four hours would be too much for one's nerves. They came last night, too, you know, but I was too tired to get up for them.

"Well, you'll think I'm romancing, but they came again last night—six Taubes—that's three times in twenty-four hours ! Yesterday already seems like a dream except for the fact that we helped to save lives, and that's all that seems to count. In the market people's arms were blown off, and one man's head ; twenty women and children lay dead in the Hospital Coltzea.

" It's nearly eight o'clock and we've had twelve hours' peace. Three of the poor legless fellows died. I am trying to console myself with the one remaining who will recover. Apparently a Zepp comes at night and the six Taubes by day. The bombs behave differently and procedure is different when avoiding a Zepp or a Taube. The latter bombs are pointed and timed, they pierce the floor, and explode downstairs—so you go up. The Zepp bombs explode on contact—so at night you go down. By day one has time to decide, as one can watch the approach, by night we sleep in our bedrooms and trust to luck. So far we have been lucky.

"They—the enemy—were undoubtedly well informed by spies, *else they would, not have come when all our airmen were away. They are scared of the French airmen and cowards at heart.*

" It's really not the bombardment that has upset me, but all the horrors I've seen. One poor chap with both legs off sat up on his bleeding stumps saying, ' Thank God I'm alive.' No bombs have fallen on the interned Germans, which is significant

of spy work. I think that the Red Cross flags should come down off the hospitals, for I'm sure that the Taubes try for them.''<sup>1</sup>

But French aviators and British 'birds' from Salonica, flying over the whole width of Bulgarian territory, across the Danube and the invading forces, to Bucharest arrived soon after, and thus put an end to the daily sport of the Knights of the Iron Cross.

\* \* \* \*

Food and provisions of all sorts were getting very scarce. At all times a most expensive city, it was now under martial law, and the simplest commodities were only to be had at exorbitant rates. The enemy was only twenty miles away, and disorganization of transport and trains was making itself woefully apparent. Meat was only permitted three days a week. Coffee was being sold at 20 francs a lb., tea 22 francs, biscuits 14 francs, while the prices demanded for boots and clothes were extortionate. The simplest serge dress or man's suit was £10 and £12. An overcoat cost £14. Coal, which is both dear and scarce even in peace time, costing generally £5 a ton, was quite unobtainable, and winter had set in with extraordinary severity.

<sup>1</sup> A correspondent (Lady Barclay) in *Th» Times History of the War*, O

No one was allowed out at night except on urgent business. Meeting or talking to friends in the streets was strictly forbidden and not more than three people might walk together. Stem measures were taken against thieving or disorder, and those caught were shot at once. The city was wrapped in darkness at night, and gloomy apprehension and fear had settled down on the civilian population. Militia-men paraded and policed the town — aged dug-outs who stumped about vigorously.

In the Government offices, banks and legations active preparations were being made for removal. Everything was being hurriedly packed, ready for the word of departure, should the worst happen. Everyone knew that the fate of the city

depended on the battle of the Arg&. The forts built round Bucharest by Briauhont were obsolete and utterly useless against the great guns the Germans possessed, and which had crumpled up the defences of Lidge and Namur so quickly I

Indeed, so serious was the Army's shortage of artillery that the heavy guns protecting Bucharest had been dismounted and, mounted on temporary platforms, had been despatched to the front. This rendered the position of the capital defenceless, and it would have been sheer folly to have risked the loss of an army through trying to hold what was after all but an open city.

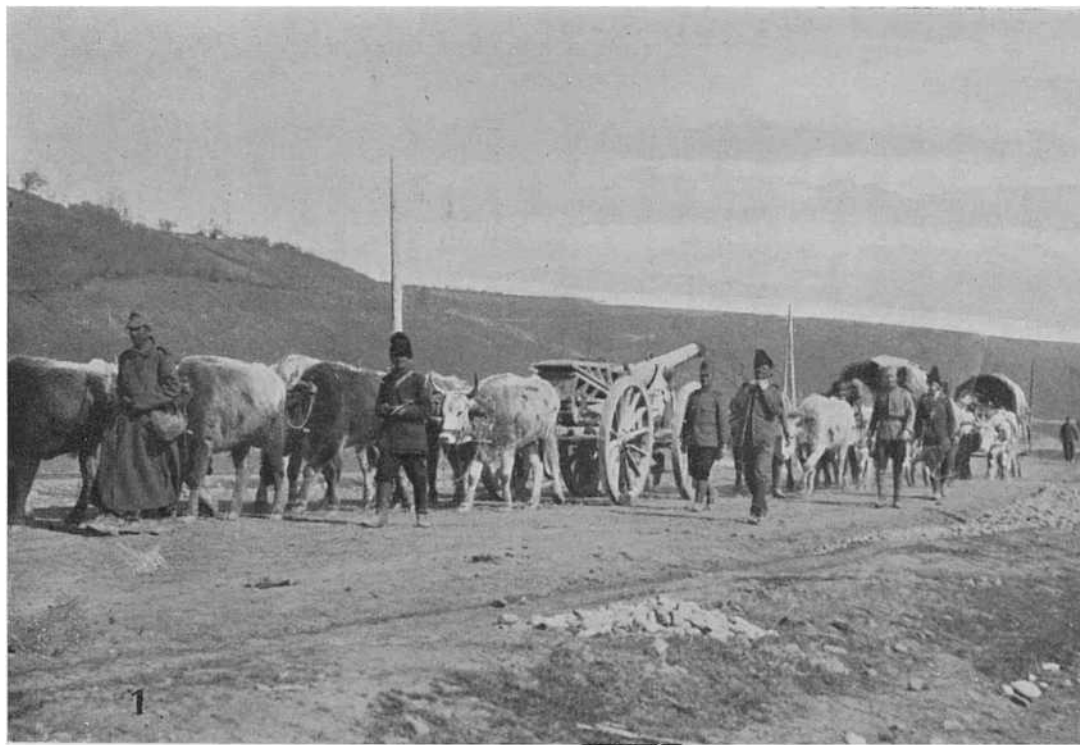
With the usual cunning and boastfulness of the Boche they had been spreading reports as to the strength and importance of the ' fortress ' in order to impress and impose on the gullibility of the people at home, and to accentuate the valour and importance of the conquest. It was also done so as to give them the excuse of indulging in the recreation of looting and destruction, so dear to





LAȘI RITIEb OF THE CHURCH IO SPIES ABOUT TO BE SHOT.

By ki d [ erinission of the *Times*



**BULLOCK TRANSPORT OF CANNON.**

One of the men is playing a teed pipe, the national niusi al instrument of Roumania.

their nature. But the Roumanian Government promptly countered their declaration by an official pronouncement on December 3rd, declaring that:—

“ Well before the commencement of the war, as is known to our enemies, Bukarest was deprived of the character of a fortress, and when the danger of occupation presented itself steps were taken for the evacuation of the city by the military elements, but not by the civil population, which has been enjoined to remain in the city.”

\* \* \* \*

Some few of the long promised, long delayed Russian troops were now arriving. Too late however. The situation was desperate, and beyond hope of saving.

The arrival of the French Military Mission seemed to put new heart into the populace, ignorant of the rumours that had been circulating as to the delay in Russia's promised help in troops and guns.

But the supplies of war material, aeroplanes and military equipment despatched to her by the Allies were being deliberately detained in Russia by order of the traitor Stuermer.

Munitions and an enormous mass of war material were lying in trains in countless railway sidings in the north of Russia. Only now was the infamy of the betrayal of Roumania by the pro-German Stuermer Government at Petrograd being suspected. Supremely critical as the situation was becoming it was incredible that such treachery could exist, and it seems to have been General Berthelot, the head of the French Mission sent out to Roumania in this crisis, who, on arrival, declared to King Ferdinand, “ Sire, we have been betrayed and the treason comes from Petrograd.”

Facts have recently come to light which show us that Roumania was summoned by Russia to the war before she was ready, and that this was done at the bidding of Berlin.

Think of the paradox ! Berlin felt sure Roumania would come in on the side of the Allies as soon as she was ready.

The Austrian Red Book has disclosed " that intervention was to come about with the least chance of success for Roumania and with the most advantage for Germany."

The Central Powers were aware that France and England had promised to send her great quantities of war material. They also knew that the time arranged for intervention would be the spring of 1917, when a great general offensive of the Allies would be launched. Under these conditions Roumania would have proved a very serious menace to the Central Powers, and one they were determined to discount if possible.

During the summer and autumn of 1916 Stuermer was Prime Minister to the Russian Government under the late Czar. Fully in sympathy with the German exCzarina in her machinations to arrange a separate peace (an obsession due, it is stated, to a message received at a spiritualistic seance that the Czarevitch would never be well while the war lasted), he was only too ready, plentifully bribed with German money, to collaborate with her and the dissolute and intriguing priest Rasputin to further Germany's designs in this direction. A plot was deliberately hatched by Stuermer with the Berlin Government, with which, it is now disclosed, he was in constant communication.

In order to accomplish the peace Stuermer and Proto- popoff sought to attain, it was decided that the Russian Government should summon Roumania by means of a quasi-ultimatum to enter the war on the side of the Entente. Brussiloff's offensive had come to a halt by the end of July, and Hindenburg's divisions were threatening seriously to outflank him.

A great defeat of the Russian armies would at once sweep these traitors from office and destroy all their ambitious schemes. This had to be averted at any cost. The storm

threatening to burst over the Russian front must be diverted, and the cost of the separate peace aimed at by those intriguers be paid for in blood and desolation by their trusting and unsuspecting neighbour Roumania.

Russia was to promise to send her munitions and troops to support her in the defence of her terribly long frontier, being more than three-quarters of the circumference of the kingdom, and Stuermer assured Berlin that once Roumania had started her offensive it would be quite easy to leave these promises unfulfilled, or so delay them that they would be useless. It will be seen how well he accomplished this.

So the famous ultimatum was despatched to the Roumanian Government, an ultimatum “ the brutality of which was only equalled by its perfidy.” Haughtily they demanded “Now or never,” and, continuing imperiously : “ for it must not be hoped that we shall again permit the Roumanian Army later on to make a military promenade and enter Austro-Hungarian territory in triumph.”

In return for her intervention the Russian Government agreed to support her with the greatly needed guns,

198 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY munitions, horses, aeroplanes, and to send two hundred thousand men to her support.

This was a vital necessity, for the small Roumanian Army, inexperienced, lacking guns, and consisting only of sixteen divisions, was quite inadequate to protect the seven hundred kilometres of the Transylvanian frontier, as well as the six hundred of the Danubian front.

Part of the plan of campaign of the Roumanian General Staff was to take possession of the Danubian bridgeheads of Rustchuk and Sistova, in order to guard against the possibility of the enemy crossing the Danube ; for it was known that two hundred thousand Bulgars reinforced by several Turkish divisions were concentrated in the Dobrudja. Russia arrogantly declared that on no account were hostilities to be directed against Bulgaria. They assured Roumania that Bulgaria would never declare war against the Slav sister nation and deliverer, and that Roumania would have nothing to fear from that quarter.

Roumania could hardly have believed this or put much faith in the " peaceful negotiations " then being conducted between their representatives in Sofia and those of that Judas of the Balkans, that unscrupulous knave, Ferdinand of Bulgaria, whose only contribution to the cause of civilization or the war has been the dexterity with which he has stabbed his neighbours in the back when they haven't been looking. The Roumanian General Staff, however, had undeniable information that several Bulgaro-Turkish divisions were already moving towards the frontier, and Russia was compelled to place two divisions at their disposal. Of these divisions one was composed of prisoners taken from the Austrians, men of Serb, Croat and Czech nationality.

It was impossible for Roumania to resist the imperious pressure of Russia, seemingly representing the Allied voice. If she refused, she knew that never alone could she realize her long cherished dream of the emancipation and union of her exiled brothers under one crown. But her confidence and faith in the French and British Governments entitled her to hope that they would “see her through,” and take full account of the vast sacrifice and uncertainty she was incurring.

Great Britain and France, believing in the loyalty of the Petrograd Government, advised Roumania to come to terms with Russia. England fighting desperately on the Somme, and France strained to her uttermost over the defence of Verdun, showed their solicitude for the Latin sister by pledging to help her “by a general offensive of the Salonica army which should begin eight days before the date of the entry into the campaign of Roumania. The desire of France to help this new Ally was so sincere that M. Briand, then President of the Council, breaking all precedents, went so far as to announce in the Chamber the projected offensive of the Orient forces. The treason which unfortunately surrounded this army on all sides rendered it impossible for General Sarrail to carry out this plan at the opportune moment. Warned by the pro-Germans of Athens of the impending attack, the Bulgarian Army made the first move and, attacking on both flanks, obliged General Sarrail to regroup his forces, which paralysed his movements. Thus the Roumanian General Staff remained alone to face the Government of Petrograd.”<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Stuermer’s German agents had been busy

<sup>1</sup> *National Review*, August, 1917.

200 ROUMANIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY intercepting and tampering with the shells, guns and aeroplanes sent out by the Allies and which had to pass through Russia. Whatever it was, some of the essential parts would be abstracted, and when the supplies eventually reached Roumania, owing to the lack of raw material and factories there, it was found impossible to replace them, and much of it was useless. With regard to the twenty thousand cavalry horses promised, none were forthcoming ; venal evasions and excuses were the only acknowledgment vouchsafed to the Roumanian Government, and it was not until the representatives of France and Great Britain protested in the strongest terms that five thousand very inferior animals were sent. Of the promised machine guns not one could be obtained; Protopopoff having mounted all he could get hold of on the roofs of the houses in Petrograd to quell the revolt he had provoked among a populace sick of the Stuermer rule.

General Iliescu of the Roumanian General Staff has since told the world that the Berlin-Stuermer Agreement was planned so that Roumania should be overrun and devastated as far as the river Sereth to allow of the triumph of the Central Powers, enabling them to conclude a separate peace in consequence of a defeat which would be represented as a Roumanian and not a Russian one. Russia's " face," as the Chinese say, would have been saved at the expense of the little Ally Roumania I By this infamous intrigue Roumania was to be divided between Russia and Austria. Russia was to annex Moldavia, while Austria-Hungary took Wallachia, and that was why the armies of Falkenhayn and Mackensen came to a stop at the Sereth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Le Genevain (cit. *Gazzetia Ticinese*, 17-111-17).



Thus Stuermer pretending to speak for the Allies “was merely the mouthpiece of Berlin, and by his quasiultimatum to Roumania to intervene in the war deliberately betrayed her.” Bought with German money and intriguing under the cloak of his official position, he played with the fate of Roumania in order to “ facilitate a premeditated act of treachery,” both as regards his own country and the Allies.

The Russian nation knew nothing of this sinister plot until the Revolution swept the traitors from their seats and disclosed their diabolical schemes.

\* \* \* \*

Pending the issue of the battle on the Argesh, the utmost foreboding reigned in the capital: “ Alternately in fear and hope, swung the grim pendulum of life and death.” Immense numbers of wounded came pouring in. The hospitals were filled to overflowing and numbers of the beautiful houses of the wealthy had been utilized for the wounded. The Queen working nobly and assisted by her daughters, the Princesses Elizabeth and Marie, seemed everywhere at once, nursing in her hospital, comforting the bereaved and dying, and seeing her soldiers off. With her arms full of flowers and gifts, she was at the station to wish them God-speed, her beautiful face anxious, but the eyes and lips bravely smiling at them, as the heavy train with its crowded human burden drew slowly out and away towards the red horizon. She barely took time to sleep, to eat, so great was her solicitude for all, so eager, so untiring her work, so anxious her tender heart for the suffering around her.

She was facing the most tragic hours that can fall to the lot of any woman—for with the nightmare invasion of

her beloved land, she, the proud Englishwoman, was the target for the vilest slanders, lies and diatribes of fury that hatch and spring so easily from the unadulterated savagery of the Prussian mind. And in the midst of the carnage and desolation that was sweeping over the land, Death brooded over the Palace. AU around the sons of mothers were dying. She was not to be spared.

Fate stood in front of her demanding the supreme sacrifice—what she loved the most, the child of her heart, the most beloved, the Uttle Prince Mircea. The Uttle one, sobbing pitifuUy as he suffered, must be given up— nothing could save him.

The terrible thunder of the guns shook and rattled the windows and waUs of the nursery as she knelt by his bedside. The heavy Uds would Uft over the brown eyes, the fair childish head would turn on the piUow as the doctor neared the bed. The Uttle hand lying so inert in his mother's would strengthen as he saw her sUent tears falling slowly. The Uttle voice, so soon to be sUent, would huskUy raUy the doctor—the dear devoted “ Docco ”—saying with a twinkle in the glazing eyes, “ pfui Docco, naughty Docco ”—knowing that his Uttle joke would chase the slow tears and bring the rare smUe to his mother's face, so grave and saddened now.

The little Prince, the pet and playmate of aU, and around whom the happy family Ufe of the Royal FamUy centred, was, in the words of his mother, “ a stoUd Uttle feUow, very independent, strong-wiUed, and who always kept weU in the middle of the road. He never would talk to me in any language but Roumanian, although he had a devoted EngUsh nurse and governess, and that I always talked EngUsh with my children. He was a great

joker and loved fun, and even when very, very ill would try to make me smile. He loved flowers and horses, and above all his little sister Ileana.”

Daily the terrible Taubes and Zeppelins bombed the Palace hoping to get a bag worthy of the acceptance of their war lord. What a prize for the award of the Iron Cross, to announce the slaughter of the beautiful children, to bomb a little child dying of typhoid, a broken-hearted woman kneeling by his bed ! What rejoicings there would be as they sped the little soul to its Maker  
I

Seventy-two bombs were dropped around the Palace and in the gardens one morning alone, their shrieking, shattering explosions drowning with their murderous roar the gasping breath of the little lad, turning piteous eyes of terror to the white-faced woman by his side. The bright toys, the rocking-horse, the gay cheerfulness of the nursery—and close and ever closer the muffled footsteps of approaching Death—the reverberation of the guns !

Could life hold a more piteous moment of agony—for renunciation—for the bowed and sobbing figure of the Queen ? Fate indeed was striking deep.

The day following the death of the child, a more determined effort than ever was made to wreck that part of the Palace in which the little figure was lying so quietly now. It was known that the Queen could hardly bear to leave the room. One of the bombs exploded in the passage outside just at the moment the painter Romani was going into the room to paint a portrait of the little dead Prince. He was killed at once, though the Queen and the body of the dead child escaped the horrible effects of the dastardly crime.

What can one say for such unutterable, such infamous deeds ? As some one has said : “If Hell were turned upside down ‘

Made in Germany ' would be found stamped on it."

\* \* \* \*

For Roumania these were indeed terrible days of anxiety. Bit by bit the heroic army were forced back, fighting stubbornly under overwhelming odds, exhausted, decimated, lacking everything, yet constantly winning a grudging acknowledgment of valour and resistance in the enemy's reports.

The treachery of General Socec and the consequent defeat of the Roumanian armies had fallen on the capital like a thunderbolt. The excitement in these bitter days of winter was indescribable. The cry : " The Germans are coming " filled the populace with terror.

But with unquenchable hope and faith they waited—with sinking hearts they waited and hoped. Where was the promised help from Russia ? Only two divisions had arrived. Where was the Brussilof offensive in Galicia that was to draw the enemy off ? The advance from Salonica ? But the Allies were too busy parleying and believing in the false protestations of neutrality of another traitor, Constantine, once of Greece. And Sarraïl, immobilized and paralysed for lack of men, munitions and railroads, could not advance for the promised assistance.

Roumania stood at bay facing her martyrdom alone. A tense pause seemed to hang over Europe as it watched the mortal struggle of the little nation, the cup raised—to be drained to its bitterest dregs.

No reproaches passed her loyal lips. The heroic spirit of the past, the spirit that through the centuries had refused to be annihilated was supporting her sons in this, their supreme trial! Well did she know the fate meted out to those the Hun conquered ! Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro—these were pictures seared into her brain by the flaming fingers of history.

The decision to evacuate the capital was taken, and a nation poured out on to roads deep in snow, iron-bound in ice, towards the frozen bitter north.

\* \* \* \*

The early morning of December the 4th a terrific report shook the city. The arsenal had been blown up by the authorities. The last hope of saving the capital had disappeared.

The next morning Mackensen sent an officer under flag of truce into the city calling upon it to surrender. He returned the next day to report that there was no fortress, no commander, and that the impressive and ostentatious ceremony of triumph the Germans had been looking forward to could not be enacted. When the Hun hordes poured in, with the exception of the great numbers of German and Austrian residents who had been battenning as spies and who welcomed their countrymen with ardour, it was almost a deserted city.

That night the horizon was aflame; and blazing like the mouth of Hell were the great oilfields, one of the richest districts in the world. All the rich stores of grain, too, had been destroyed, burnt, or soaked in petrol, so the Hun, ravenous and bent on plunder, was baulked of his prey.

The heroic Roumanian armies, fighting superbly without ammunition at the last, had escaped encirclement.

206 ROUMANIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY There was no Sedan, and an empty city was the conqueror's hollow triumph.

\* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the terrible winter of Eastern Europe, eighteen below zero, had settled down on the stricken country, enfolding in its glacial grip the famishing, homeless fugitives and wounded.

During that ghastly retreat as much as £300 was paid for a taxi to carry someone's family away from the German hordes. Thirty thousand people waited at the station in the vain hope that a train would be provided to take them north. The few railways—the terrible crisis of the moment—had disorganized everything, and the supplying of the army was the first vital consideration of the Government. The congestion on the narrow roads —on the bridges—was so great that an inextricable wedged mass prevented progress.

And all the time the ferocious Uhlands were at the heels of the terrified fugitives. The aged succumbed at once; little ones, frozen and starved, lay by the wayside; their heart-broken mothers dropped dead with exhaustion beside them; and the wounded from the hospitals who could crawl, and even those who could hardly do so, dragged themselves along till cold, hunger and mortification ended their terrible suffering. The gallant little nation was indeed treading its *Via Dolorosa*—the bitter cup was being drained.

From Bucharest they journeyed into a country of poverty and want ; everything was left—home, money, food !

Surrounded on three sides by hordes of Turks, Bulgars, Magyars and Teutons, and lying at the very back of

Europe, there were no open arms to succour and help her as England, France, America and Italy held out to Serbia and Belgium in their terrible flight. Money, food, clothing, shelter were provided for the fugitives there. Guns, men, food, equipment, hospitals were sent to their support, and to sustain the remnants of *their* armies.

But for Roumania no deliverer, no Samaritan was near. Surrounded by the horror and clamour of war, the stream of pitiful humanity fled northwards before the most vicious foe ever faced by mankind. Bit by bit they were driven back—and still back—past the homes and fields of the more prosperous land.

“ Over the death-strewn plains,  
Fierce 'mid the cold white stars,”

into the little remnant of beloved soil—the bleak northern province left them—frozen under its shroud of snow.

## CHAPTER XI

### A QUEEN AND HER PEOPLE

*By H.M. the Queen of Roumania*

#### MY CHILD

**D**EATH is sweeping over the earth; in all | lands, beneath many suns, thousands of brave boys are giving their Eves; mothers are crying; the earth is drinking nothing but blood.

And because Death has become master, he stretches out his hand and wants also to pluck the buds that were to have flowered in the days to come—he stretches out his hand and tries to seize hold of my own treasure, of my last-born, of the child of my heart.

There is not yet enough dying, enough sorrow, enough sacrifice—each woman must learn to give up what she loves, must weep, must hide her head in the dust.

In these days, the sons of Queens are not allowed to throw away their Eves in battle ; but, so that better I should understand the tears of every mother, Death has stolen into my house and stands there waiting, ready to tear from me my youngest, the most innocent, the one most without defence.

There he Ees on the narrow whiteness of his bed, fighting back some invisible terror which is too big. I seem to be struggling with him, yet all my love cannot help 208

A QUEEN AND HER PEOPLE 209 him. I am powerless before his suffering, my anguish cannot lessen it, my



tears cannot cool the fever in his blood.

All around me the sons of mothers are dying and here within the walls of this guarded chamber my child is dying—and I cannot hold him back. He becomes the symbol of my country's tragedy; he is wrestling against an enemy he is unable to overcome, whilst not far off, on all our frontiers our armies are struggling against invading forces that inch by inch are tearing the holy soil of home from beneath our feet.

My child is powerless as my country is powerless ; our love, our prayers, our efforts, the spilling of our blood are in vain, for indeed there are hours that belong not to the will of man, but that belong to Fate.

\* \* \* \*

It is my birthday ! A day set apart for national rejoicing—and death stands waiting, waiting at the side of my child's bed.

Others are also waiting for me; my wounded are waiting, they too are my children, for days I have neglected them ; because of my cruel anxiety I have not been able to go to them, but they need me, their voices call me—too many need me ! Sometimes I feel as though it were too much, as though it would drive me mad. . . .

Yet on this day, all have a right over me, I must forsake no one, the most humble must be able to reach my heart.

Flowers have been brought to me in fragrant profusion, the floor is strewn with them, they lie on the tables, they are massed on every chair, the air is filled with their perfume.

What is the meaning of all these flowers ? Have they p  
210 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY been brought to me for a day of rejoicing, or for a day of —death ?

Filling my arms with them I hurry to the beds of my wounded; there is so little time—my child is dying. His voice is calling me back—but, oh, there are so many beds, so many I Shall I ever reach the last ?

What are they saying to me as they bend to kiss my hands ? I cannot clearly see their faces, for my eyes are full of tears. I cannot clearly hear their voices because of the throbbing of my anguished heart—what are they saying ? One name is on every Up—Mircea ! Mircea ! They are wishing health and recovery to the child of my heart. But he is dying. Know ye not that he is dying ? My heart cries out the awful certainty, and I bury each bed under my flowers as though in some dream-ritual I were decking with them the beds of the dead.

\* \* \* \*

Mircea is resting. . . . Mircea's struggle is over. . . . Mircea is at peace. . . . Mircea is dead.

Now the chamber of suffering is silent, the screams are a thing of the past; they belonged to earthly terrors—for Mircea all earthly terrors are passed.

Like a little light that flickers and goes out, thus did he die—no more screams, hardly a sigh. He was tired, his heart could bear the strain no longer; he was too small a fighter, so God let him die, like a little light that goes out—thus did God let him die.

\* \* \* \*

Mircea is dead.

All Souls' Day 1 The leaves are falling, the heavens are weeping tears of regret, like a veil of mourning, mist covers the earth.

All Souls' Day, and on the eve of this day, Mircea's soul has flown to God.

The leaves are falling, the heavens are weeping tears of regret—like a veil of mourning, mist covers the earth.

\* \* \* \*

It is over.

The grave is closed, a heavy stone lies over your face, the tapers have been put out, the solemn chants have died away, the flowers are tired, shadow fills the church.

It is over.

Neither my prayers nor my tears, neither my despair nor my suffering can bring you back to me, Mircea, my child.

I saw how they lowered your tiny coffin down into a hole that was full of night ; so that less sombre should be that night I filled the gaping hole with flowers, flowers, flowers—and all the flowers were white.

Then I left you, my Mircea. I turned my foot away from your place of rest, I turned it towards the emptiness, towards the unfathomable void of the days that are to know you no more, I turned it back towards the house where your bed stands empty, whilst you lie so small and forsaken in your coffin under the ground.

And yet I know, Mircea, that is only your poor little body that lies there under the ground !

This is not a time for mourning in darkened chambers, not a time for idle weeping, not a time for rest.

My own sorrow must not separate me from others' sorrows, it must be but an added link between me and my people, not keep me from them at a time when they need me most,

My country is calling, although darkness has descended like a pall on my soul, once more must I take up my burden and walk.

Whither shall I turn my saddened face ? To what beds of suffering, to what homes of woe ? Better for a while to listen to

## 212 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

voices that awake no memory, to wander towards regions where he has never been, amongst strangers who did not know him, who saw not his hours of agony, who heard not his screams of pain.

Better go away ! Whilst my wound is still bleeding, so that it should not be touched—go there where my pity is most needed, where my tears can flow freely, where it is no shame to weep !

\* \* \* \*

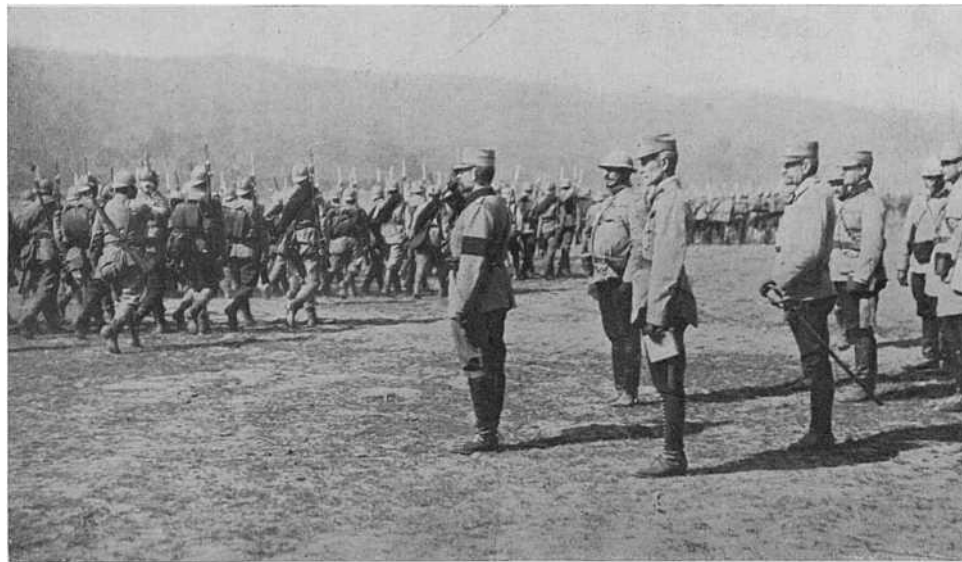
Therefore I left the daily routine and went to many places, carrying my own grief amongst the most miserable and forsaken, carrying my breaking heart to those who needed no words, only caresses and gestures of love.

As one but half conscious, I travelled through many parts of my land, motoring miles and miles along endless stretches at the dying season of the year ; I passed through peaceful valleys; 'neath frowning mountainsides, over plains where the fields were at rest, and my soul was one with this country, its agony was the agony of my heart, the cries of the wounded were the cries of the child I had lost, and when bending over the beds of the dying, I knew no more if it was for their woe I was weeping or for my own !

From those dark comers of suffering where the wounded lay huddled together, their marred and bleeding visages turned to the wall, from the land itself, from its invaded frontiers, from its fields, its villages, its towns and forests



THE QUEEN AND HER LITTLE SON, PRINCE MIRCEA.



KIN  
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HIS  
TRO  
OPS.

**Behind are General Avertscu and General  
Prcean.**

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A QUEEN AND HER PEOPLE 213 a mighty groan of anguish seemed rising towards the skies. I felt as though I must bend down and lift up all that anguish, lift it with both my hands and carry it away with me so as to relieve those less able to bear such a weight.

Yet what could I do ? With the greatness of my Love could I save my country ? Had I with my Love even been able to save the life of my child ?

#### BUCHAREST

There is an hour of which I have never spoken—an hour of darkness and sorrow that I could share with no one, an hour when I had to carry my head very high so that none should see the tears in my eyes, an hour when naught else remained to me but to look beyond the things of this earth towards shadowy Futures that belong only to God.

I had to be strong at that hour, not to cry out, not to complain, but to lead the way into exile very simply, very quietly, so as to avoid all panic, so that no one should be afraid. Others depended upon me, all eyes were turned towards me to see how I would bear that which was unbearable, so I was silent; at that hour silence alone could help.

Three months have passed since then, three long months—months that could be years, so full are they of anguish and pain and grief. Months that I have lived close to the heart of my people, months when I have heard their cries, and hoped their hopes and feared their fears. Months in which I have struggled with them and wept with them, doing all that was in my power to ease their burden and to dry their tears.





But if there are hours when silence alone can render bearable the duty one has to perform, there are others when one has a right to lift up one's voice and to cry out one's longing and one's regret.

It is three months since Bucharest was taken from us, since the enemy struck at the heart of our land. Three months—and to-day I want all those who love and all those who weep and all those who regret, to turn their faces with mine towards that far-off distance and to remember that which we have lost.

It is to me as though I must climb some very high mountain, up, up, till I reach its summit, so that from there I might perceive at least the smoke rising from that town which once was our loved and cherished centre and that now lies chained and silent 'neath the enemy's relentless sway.

Yes, indeed, heart of our land ! Pulsing centre that held us together, fed our energies and filled us with pride. Who of us will ever forget those last days of anguish, when hope became always less, when from all sides the voice of the cannon called out its fearful message, called out its warning, telling us that danger was coming ever nearer—that soon it would be flight and exile and sorrow and darkness.

Difficult it is to speak of one's own sorrow when the suffering of all was so great, yet if to-day I speak of mine, it is because I know that it is my country's sorrow, that a thousand thousand voices are echo to mine when I talk of that for which we are mourning ; of that which lies beyond the line of fire, that like a wound upon a mother's breast cuts our dear country in two.

I wish my voice to reach every heart, to penetrate into every home, to go out towards the most miserable, to search out the hero on his bed of snow; I want you all to know that I have wept with you, that there are none of your griefs that I have not shared, none of your despairs that I have not understood, none

of your sacrifices that I have not appreciated, but this message would I bring you : Hearts are bound more closely together in days of sorrow than in days of joy, in days of war than in days of peace.

I cannot know for which special sorrow each man is mourning—I know not what house, what spot, what face he sees in his dreams, I know not to what hope he clings, to what joy he desires to go back ; there is a national sorrow and there is a personal sorrow, that last one each man carries alone in his heart.

Bucharest ! Thy name conjures up pictures without end in the mind of those who have been obliged to surrender thee to the hated foe. We remember thee with all thy faces, in sunshine, in rain and in snow, we remember thee busy yet smiling, within thy streets all seemed happy; it is to us, now that we are torn from thee, as though we had known naught but joy within thy embrace.

What is thy face of to-day, oh Bucharest ? Hast thou veiled thyself in mourning because so many of thy children have fled ? Or dost thou wear a smile of false acquiescence, so as not to draw down upon thy trembling inhabitants the wrath of those who now call themselves masters and who perchance keep thee in better order than thine own children ever did. Have thy proudest buildings been desecrated with flags that are not dyed in the three holy colours before which each Roumanian uncovers his head ?

Have the blinds of thy windows been drawn down so that those who have remained should not see men in pointed helmets marching to and fro before the house of thy King ? Are the hospitals we prepared so tenderly for our wounded filled with foreigners that speak not our language, that mock at our sorrow, rejoicing over the misery they have strewn over our land ?

O Bucharest, I left thee without a word of farewell, I who so

often have been acclaimed in thy streets ! It was told that I must steal away from thee in silence, show no sorrow, say no good-bye, betraying no emotion so as to awaken no panic in the hearts of those who were to stay I

Like a traitor did I feel, like a coward, to leave thee thus to thy fate ! To go away, to know naught of thy sorrow, to leave thee, unprotected, to those who soon would suck thy heart's blood.

And Cotroceni I House that I love, house that little by little I have modelled to my taste, house that knows the voices of my children, in whose garden their babyfeet have toddled about. Cotroceni I I left thee taking no leave of those who were to remain to protect thee, casting hardly a look upon the rooms that once had been my pride—I had the courage to smile into the face of the old family servants who looked at me anxiously as though divining that my silence hid some awful truth.

Yes, I left thee—and from one, one only did I take leave I But that one was so small and so silent that never will he relate what his mother said to him in that hour before her flight I

It was evening—the shadows were already stealing into the church, and with them I slipped into the sanctuary where a heap of white flowers spread a mystic light.

And there beside that grave but so recently closed I tore from me the mask that all day I had worn, and cried out my pain to the little one, lying beneath the stones.

I confessed to him that I was going—going not knowing when I would come back. I asked him to forgive me for forsaking him, to forgive his mother for taking the five others with her, whilst she left him lonely, he who was smallest of all ! Left him to the mercy of those who soon would take possession of the places we had loved !

As I wept in solitary despair, it seemed to me that I heard the tread of the approaching armies, and shudderingly I realized that it was the breasts of our soldiers that were forming a rampart around our threatened home ! I thought of all those who still must fall before the enemy could reach this sacred door ! And with anguish I realized that I would no more be there to bind up their wounds, to console their defeat.

Perhaps it was so that some vital part of my being should remain in our capital even after our retreat, that I was destined to leave my youngest there beneath the cold slabs of the church. Did perchance God tear him from us as a sign that all this sorrow, all this sacrifice is but a passing horror, that because Mircea lies there awaiting my return, that surely, surely I must come back ?

When he died, the popular belief was that the Heavens had claimed from me a sacrifice, that God had taken my child from me that in his perfect innocence he should plead for the country he was destined to quit so soon !

So let it be ! For I believe in the day of return, I believe in the hour of victory, I believe that the blood of our heroes has not been shed in vain !

One day thy arms will be opened wide to receive us,

## 218 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

O Mother-town ! Flags will fly from thy windows, thy streets will be strewn with branches, and those who return to thy embrace will not know if their hearts are breaking with sorrow or with joy I

It lies in God's hand if I your Queen am to share that solemn hour with you—but this one boon do I ask of my people, that if my feet should not enter the dear city with you, carry all the flowers that you would have given me to the church where my little one lies, carry them there to his grave, heap them in masses above him, fill the whole church with flowers, so that he who so long was lonely should have a share in your songs of praise !

MARIE.

## CHAPTER XII

### TO THE FROZEN NORTH

In the steppe cruel wind skirleth,  
Speeding furiously,  
Round the low oaken cross  
Blizzard cheerlessly. *Fet.*

Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.—*Ezekiel.*

**N**EVER perhaps in all the long centuries of tyranny, oppression and bloodshed undergone by Roumania, have her sons so needed the sustaining light and hope of faith in their destiny as in those cruel days of a winter unparalleled in its grim severity, when the very depths of human misery were reached.

Her anguish has been all the deeper because it followed on the brilliant success of the early part of her campaign. The valiant ardour of her people was burning to avenge their suffering kinsmen and dreaming that Right must conquer Might, and giving nobly their all for the cause.

In those tragic days of iron-bound winter a nation fled desperately before the unmentionable atrocities, torture, starvation and slavery that the Hun and Bulgar mete out to those they conquer, and which has made their names to stink in the nostril of every civilized being.

Onward—despairing, starving, frozen, dying, the pitiful stream of agonised humanity pushed ; in icy blizzards, 219

220 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY snow that

buried them as they fell, heart-broken and exhausted : slipping into the drifts never to rise again : sleeping in the arctic night never to wake again.

Forward—the bleak lonely north looms—Russia, menacing, mysterious. Behind them, all that is most dear—the smiling south of yesterday, the homes so cherished—the life, the love, the happiness !

The whistling winter blast dies down. . . . The cold clear stars like sword-points glitter forth—the stars that have looked down upon the eternal ages, watching in silent stillness the tragedy and travail of man !

A grey dawn creeps up like a ghost from the sullen silence of the wind-swept steppes. . . . Bleak and brooding it pauses before the tragic scene—then lashing its shroud of sleet, cuts like a whip in the faces of the stricken fugitives.

Like a lantern of light down the desolate, unending road flashes the ancient words of comfort, of hope ; words that sustained their ever-battling, never despairing forefathers—*Românul nu piere*—the Roumanian never dies!

\* \* \* \*

And close to the bleak inhospitable steppes, the seething anarchical frontier of Russia, near the river Pruth, that river of ill-omen which divides Roumania from her lost province of Bessarabia, stands Jassy, the old capital of Moldavia—the little bit of northern land—all that is left to the despairing and stricken country.

To this town the Court, Government, Legations and the vast stream of wounded and fugitives retired. Urgent measures were taken to try and relieve the awful suffering and distress. But the difficulties were stupendous and

TO THE FROZEN NORTH 221 the means to overcome them almost nil. The catastrophe was so swift, so



appalling, that the nation reeled under it.

The King, the kindest, gentlest of men, had aged greatly in appearance and his face, deeply lined with the terrible anxiety weighing upon him, was showing a splendid fortitude and courage. Princesses Elizabeth and Maria were nursing in the hospitals as hard as any of the nurses, and doing everything and anything that he could was young Prince Nicolas, in his Boy Scout uniform driving his little car which was generally full of all sorts of things for hospitals, wounded, etc. The Queen working superbly and with heroic devotion, ceaselessly strove to alleviate the misery, and cope with the great streams of wounded pouring in. The little city was taxed to the uttermost and quite unable to find accommodation for the four million people that crowded into it for refuge.

A friend, a very well-known Englishman, there at the time wrote me : “ It is difficult to adequately describe the suffering, to find words to express the terrible state of affairs or give a real idea of the awfulness of the position.” Virtually the whole civil population was on the verge of starvation. The hastily organized hospitals were lacking in everything—equipment, disinfectants, drugs, etc., had to be deserted in the retreat and had fallen into the hands of the enemy. It was of highest importance to replace them at once, and yet to obtain them at first almost impossible.

Plague, pestilence and famine were rife, the few hospitals were filled to repletion, and the overflow of wounded and diseased were scattered in the various houses and buildings in the overcrowded town. Supplies 222 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY of drugs, dressings and chloroform were completely exhausted, and the mortality from and suffering during operations and amputations from the want of anaesthetics, dressings and disinfectants was indescribably terrible.

Can you understand Roumania's plight ? Do you realize that nothing can enter this country—the Back Door of Europe—save through the north ?

From the south, east, west, not *one* grain of wheat— not *one* strip of bandage could reach that stricken land— except by the long narrow path through Norway, Sweden, Russia—weeks *en route*.

Typhus and cholera were raging, and so limited was the accommodation that these cases could not be isolated and had to be housed with the wounded. What hope could there be for the latter—debilitated, exhausted by wounds and lack of food—of escaping this added terror ? These appalling diseases ravaged army and civilian population alike. Two hundred doctors as well as many nurses succumbed in a few weeks, after working heroically amidst the most distressing circumstances, with a superb self-sacrifice and devotion, and lacking nearly everything that was vitally indispensable for their work.

Roumania produces no soap and little coal, and there was none forthcoming. All supplies had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Imagine the want of these in hospitals during an arctic winter ! No heating, no sterilizing, no washing of wounds, clothes, floors. Think what this meant !

My friend writes me again : “I have myself seen with my own eyes men virtually dying of starvation and disease because there was nothing but *paper swabs*, or some *sawdust* with which to dress their wounds and—when the

men had been already without food for days—nothing to build them up in the shape of nourishment. With twenty degrees below zero, though there was plenty of wood in the country, there was nothing to heat the hospitals with. The roads deep in snowdrifts were impassable, and the great mortality among the horses and oxen owing to lack of fodder, the shortage of labour (every able male being with the army and all vehicles requisitioned) made it impossible to remedy the want for a while.”

Disease and hunger claimed many more victims than the Hun foe did, and the peasants—such patient souls, enduring everything so uncomplainingly—would drag themselves into Jassy, staggering exhausted after a tramp in the snow of fifteen to twenty miles to beg for some food for their children. Matches were so scarce that even in the bitter weather crowds of men would gather at street corners on the look out for some one to pass, who might have a lighted cigarette, and the moment one appeared there would be a wild but polite scramble to beg his permission to light their cigarettes from his, in the vain endeavour to stih the cold and hunger paralysing them. The Russians would give three hundred roubles for a tiny bottle of scent or eau-de-Cologne which they would drink. Another friend wrote me :—

“ The agony of it ah has nearly killed the Queen. During the month of March in Jassy alone, there were over nine thousand patients down with typhus, scarlet fever, cholera and diphtheria—and no isolation hospitals. Dangerously wounded men had to be next most infectious cases. I think I am as thick-skinned as anyone with what I have seen since the commencement of this war

224 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY and my two previous wars, but I tell you that if you could print the word *awful* in the biggest letters that were ever dreamt of in size, and the greater you printed the word, the more it would emphasize the meaning, you could not print it big enough to adequately describe matters as they are here.”

Well men died returning to their regiments, deteriorated from lack of food and clothes. One train of seven hundred wounded arrived, after being detained in a blizzard, with only eighty men alive ! And these splendid, famished, wounded sons of Roumania were found clasped close in each other's arms, trying in the agony of starving and freezing misery to keep a little life, a little warmth in their maimed and tortured bodies.

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“ Clime of the unforgotten brave, Whose land from plain to  
mountain cave Was freedom's home or glory's grave !  
Shrine of the mighty, can it be That that is all remains of  
thee ? ”

This, the little strip of territory, the bleak bare north was all now that was left Roumania of her wide, beautiful, and prosperous land. She faced the disaster unflinchingly, and by the middle of January the remnant of the Roumanian Army had been skilfully withdrawn to the defences on the line of the river Sereth.

After stubborn fighting the best North German regiments, under General von Kiihne, took the little town of Mănești, on the right bank of the Sereth. The gain was barren and they were unable to develop their success, while the rigours of a winter that surpassed all records put a stop to any operations on a large scale. Local and minor engagements were constantly taking place, how-

ever, and the grim struggle continued ; a fight against nature as well as man.

An officer fighting there thus describes it :—

“ Up to now winter in the forests of the Carpathians had been only playing with men ; now it showed its teeth and turned to grim earnest. In the high mountains the roads hitherto ran, like soft ribbons of velvet, over the passes. Now they were like hard bands of steel, hard, shining bands of steel, binding together the consecutive valleys. They were like perfect toboggan runs ; the lorries skidded and swerved on them out of control side on to the road before you knew.

“ No more soft covering of snow, only hard iron nakedness. Cloudless, starry nights. The earth rings like metal, the trees snap, wolves leave the forests and run on the open road. Friend and enemy lie out on the mountain side opposite to each other, frozen to the marrow.

“ No strategy has ever foreseen that this country would once become a theatre of war. These mountains look as wild and desolate as any bits of unknown Asia ; forests untouched by any woodman’s hand, protected, it would seem by their own loneliness and inaccessibility. Only here and there runs a little light railway looking most unmilitary and casual. Every road in these mountains is roundabout ; there is no connection from one to the other of the long valleys which traverse them, except tracks of smugglers and poachers. At the entrance of the valleys which lead from Moldavia into Transylvania or at their exit, you may see perhaps an insignificant village ; no other human habitation near, if it be not a saw mill or the house of the customs guard on the fron-

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226 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY tier. Fires and winds have ravished the forests. In places the great trees lie prostrate like straw, their heads to the east, their withered roots heaving up masses of dry earth, and they are covered by an impenetrable tangle of boughs.

" Elsewhere the war has found territory prepared for it, here it breaks as a strange thing into the primeval forest. Here man has to start at the beginning the work of the reclaiming of the wilderness, not for food and habitation, but for war. Roads and railways have been made—for the war.

“ The air in the valley is like ice : the high plateau on which we stand is surrounded by mountain ranges, like a little Thibet, its atmosphere dim with ice-cold winter vapours. Curiously as you mount higher you feel it grow warmer, in the daytime at any rate. At night the frost is uniformly cruel everywhere, and in this murderous wintry desolation men dig themselves into the iron ground, stalk each other, storm these God-forsaken and nameless heights, defend them to the death as if they were possessions of the greatest price. There is the noise of the axe in the virgin forest, roads force their way through the chaos of fallen trees.

" Buzzards and vultures hover overhead, then suddenly fly off scared as the report of a gun resounds in the forest underneath and splinters of trees are thrown high in the air. A she-bear with her two cubs comes stumbling on our picket, stands on her hind feet for a time before the strange apparition, swaying her head. The picket dare not shoot for fear of arousing the enemy. Man and beast stand perplexed face to face till the old bear shuffles off again into the thicket.



**'J HE KING *H*ESTOWING DECORATIONS  
ON THE SPLENDID ROUMANIAN  
SOLDIERS.**

**'J lie Crow» Prince and Prince Nicholas in  
background,**

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**IN THE TRENCHES : WINTER BOUND.**



“Huts have been built in the wilderness, but one has to remember in the darkness the wolves which inhabit the forest. A staff officer of our division was besieged in an outlying hut by wolves who howled and whined outside till some soldiers scared them off. The battle fronts in this gruesome war measure by the thousands of miles, but nowhere is there a region more wild, more desolate and less inhabitable.

“I stand in the darkness in front of our hut and look at the stars which shine in a narrow strip of sky above the valley. A regular ticking sound is heard through the night, like the beating of a nervous, anxious, diseased heart. Again and again an endless, restless ticking. The typewriter—in the snow-covered mountains, in the midst of primeval forests—the typewriter in the office of the staff. Perhaps the ticking signifies an order to attack, a report of losses in battle or a request for reinforcements. Here, on the Moldavian border, humanity has reverted to its original wild condition, and yet this ticking tries to speak of the ages that have passed over the earth. Steadily long lines of letters are drawn, one after the other, and a faint hope revives in one’s heart that there may yet be a return from our fall, a return to civilization.”<sup>1</sup>

No one will ever know what the sufferings the Roumanian Army went through. A little has filtered through, but the full tale of horror they endured in this ferociously unequal contest with a savage, highly experienced, cruelly vindictive foe will never be known.

Added to the lack of equipment which made itself felt after the first successes, and during the retreat, when sticks and stones were used, and rifles had to be taken

<sup>1</sup> Correspondent in *The Times History of the War*.

228 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY from the enemy dead, they were terribly hampered indeed, often sacrificed by the inexperience and negligence of some of their officers.

General Averescu, who like our late Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir W. R. Robertson, has risen from the ranks, is a man of iron character, stern and resolute. Cowards receive short shrift from him whoever they are, and several were court-martialled and shot for this offence. To the brave and the efficient he is a true friend. His interest, contact and knowledge of the men under him is very close, and he is quick and generous in rewarding valour and devotion to duty.

Under his regime a great number of the generals who took part in the opening events of the war have been relieved of their commands or given less responsible posts, while the commanders of the divisions are all young men, not promoted according to seniority, but who have given undoubted proof of their ability, and who inspire confidence among the men.

Full justice must be given to him and his capable Chief of Staff, General Presân, for the ability and fortitude displayed in the tragic retreat. After the first brief successes General Averescu quickly grasped the grave elements of danger, and by the skilful defence of the passes, and the best disposition possible of his small armies, prevented the complete annihilation and encirclement of his forces, aimed at by the enemy.

Standing with their backs to the wall, ill-equipped, inexpert in warfare and unsupported, the gallant little army during ten terrible weeks put up an heroic defence marked, as Colonel Buchan has said, by “ conspicuous instances of Roumanian qualities in the field. The battles of

Hermannstadt and the Striu Valley, the defence of the Predeal, Torzburg and Rothen Thurm Passes, the first battle of Târgu-Jiu and Presân's counter-stroke on the Arges, were achievements of which any army might be proud. And the staunch valour of the Roman legionaries still lived in the heroic band who under Anastasiu cut their way from Orșova to the Aluta."

With regard to the splendid peasant soldier of Roumania he is in many respects somewhat like the *Poilu*. He is perhaps more sturdily built, has perhaps a squarer, simpler character and face ; bright intelligent eyes, a quick friendly smile with the dignity and ease of manner of the man who has lived much with nature; fearless, steady, patient, resourceful, these are the lessons the great Mother teaches her sons in forest, plain or mountain, and these were the qualities he had to show in this desperate struggle. The Roumanian peasant is splendid military material, and is more civilized than his neighbours, Slav, Turk, or Magyar. Patient, sober, tenacious and capable of great effort his love and devotion for his country is intense, and the ardour and fury of sacrifice in defence of his land is very touching and wonderful. Impulsive and ready to leap to a white heat of fury, he has a tender heart for suffering, be it for friend or foe ; and none of the ferocious savagery found in the Turk, the Bulgar, the Hun and the Magyar is found in his nature. Hamilton Fyfe, who knows them well, says that they put into practice the teaching of Epictetus, that everything has two handles ; one handle is that " enemies are enemies, the other handle is that they are fellow-men."

## CHAPTER XIII

### AT BAY

The Hun now satiated with blood and booty, still trampling in blood and ashes in an orgy of lust and robbery on Belgium, Poland, Serbia, Roumania.—*Frederic Harrison.*

**W**ITH the fall of Bucharest the curtain descended on the final scene of the first act of the tragedy. The wide sweep of Teutonic, Bulgar and Turkish forces, all that means reaction, rapine, barbarism and murder, had engulfed three-fourths of the country. The Great Adventure launched with such high hope, for justice and freedom for the oppressed, was well-nigh crushed, and the barbarian Powers, like blatant cocks atop the cinder heaps, were raucously crowing their exultation over the defeat of the small opponent. It had, however, taken the picked troops of four Powers with their two most famous generals to accomplish this feat !

For the moment Roumania's resistance had been pulverized. German troops had forced open the last remaining gateway to the East and had now in their covetous grasp the fertile lands producing the great yields of grain, cattle, oil and minerals so essential for the continuance of the Teutonic struggle.

The success of the great ' pincers ' offensive of the Central Powers—a converging movement of two large armies endeavouring to crush their opponent between 230

them—which had been carried out in the offensive against the Russians on the Narew, at Tannenberg, Augustovo and in Eastern Prussia, had been closely followed in the strategy of the Roumanian campaign.

According to the Hindenburg-Ludendorf plans, General von Falkenhayn, advancing in the north and north-west, with the object of attacking the Roumanian armies, was to be supported by General von Mackensen operating to the south between the Dobrudja and the Carpathians. By means of the Teutonic, Bulgar and Turkish troops they were to enclose within their grip the small Roumanian Army, which, unsupported and ill equipped, had to defend a line much more extensive than that held by the British, French and Belgian armies on the Western front.

Let us carefully note this, for few of us in the British Isles realize the tremendous extent of front, and the terrible strain this small nation had to bear to withstand the picked forces of the war-seasoned, and highly equipped armies of the Teutonic fighting machine, with all their advantages of interior lines and splendid railway service, great factories and reserve of war material. According to their calculations the Roumanian armies would be cut in half, and three-fourths of them probably annihilated. They aimed at winning the whole of Roumania, Bessarabia and Southern Russia up to Odessa, thus giving them the immense grain and oil fields, and the command of the Black Sea and the whole of the Danube. All this would greatly mitigate the acute economic problems facing them at home, and would replenish their larder, while depriving the Russian and Roumanian armies of their most fertile lands, and so thereby diminishing their powers of resistance.

To the north along the Moldavian border the Russians, tinder Generals Kaledin and Lechitsky, the conquerors of Lutsk and Czernovitz, were holding the line against the Austro-German forces of Generals Kovess, von Arz, and Gerok, under the supreme command of a blue-blooded figurehead the Archduke Charles Francis Joseph. Further south General von Falkenhayn's ninth German Army was operating, while Field-Marshal von Mackensen held the supreme command from Dorna Vatra to the Black Sea.

Until January Wallachia still remained the principal field of operations. By this time the Russian reinforcements had arrived, but all the skill of the Russian Generals was unable at this late hour to counterbalance the terrible omission, the criminal negligence, disorganization and treachery of the Stuermer administration.

It was the old, old story. Too late ! Too late ! Half the forces if sent in time might have saved the country ; now that the disaster had happened and the unhappy nation and army were in retreat, the invasion looked as if it could not be stayed.

Tulcea, one of the most important towns in the Dob- rudja, and a big commercial centre, fell. Inhabited by a mixed population of Roumanians, Russians, Jews, Greeks, Armenians, Turks, it is a flat town of low buildings and fishermen's huts ; lying on the western fringe of the Delta, it is divided by the Danube from Russia.

Braila, the fourth largest town in Roumania with a population of seventy thousand, had also to be evacuated. The headquarters of the gram trade and chief port of Wallachia, it was a thriving and prosperous town on the Danube. British steamers of four thousand tons could load and unload at its wharves, where great grain elevators



and warehouses were established. Everything that could be of value to the enemy had been removed. The shops were empty and shuttered, and hardly a bootlace, shirt or tin of food could be bought or commandeered by the hungry hosts of the invader.

From Braila the German armies swept up towards Focsani, and their ultimate aim was to turn the line of the Sereth and invade Bessarabia and the direct road to Odessa.

\* \* \* \*

By January the actual battle front lay roughly on a line of about 135 miles from Galatz, at the junction of the Sereth with the Danube, to Focsani and the Gyimes Pass in the Carpathians. North of Galatz lies the southern portion of the valley of the Sereth, six to ten miles wide ; a region of marshes, swamps and minor streams. Few roads exist here, indeed not a single one crosses it below Nomoloasa, half-way to Focsani. Beyond Focsani the valley of the middle Sereth stretches a distance of some thirty miles, and was considered to be the weakest part of the line ; the river, no very serious obstacle, cutting its way between level plains free from marsh.

The line north of this lies amoilg the Carpathian ranges. The ground here, difficult enough in summer, was impenetrable in winter ; a pathless snow-bound waste, of giant forest, wolf-haunted ; grim mountain peaks and lonely mist-enshrouded valleys.

This line, the line of the Sereth, was the first strong continuous line across Roumania since the enemy had burst through the line at Târgu-Jiu early in September. It was a well acknowledged strategical front even before the war, and in all the plans considered by the Roumanian

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General Staff in case of hostilities with Russia or the Balkans had played a prominent part. A system of fortresses built by the Belgian engineer Briaultmont, and completed under the supervision of German experts, ran along the river. The fortifications, consisting of ten groups of batteries arranged in three lines on a front of ten miles, formed the eastern bastion ; the centre, over a front of twelve miles, consisted of eight groups in two lines, while around Focsani they extended in a circle of fifteen miles, forming fifteen groups in three rows. Unfortunately they had neither been planned with a view to withstanding hostilities except from the north, nor were they proof against the heavy artillery of modern times, but they could still be utilized as bases for defence.

By the middle of January the enemy was held on this line. The strength of the wings, protected by the mountains on the north and the wide Danube to the south, prevented the narrowness of the weaker centre being rushed by the enemy, and unless the latter could wrest the position of strength from the Roumanians among the Carpathians to the north, or on the marshes of the Lower Sereth, they had little chance of breaking through the centre without subjecting their flank and rear to a counter-attack.

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This first winter of war, unparalleled in its arctic severity, had gripped the land ; and the resistance of the army, Russian as well as Roumanian, standing on their new and stronger line, prevented any very active offensive on the part of the enemy. The disaster and desolation that had engulfed the beautiful and prosperous country —now, more than ever, and tragically so, the Belgium of

the East—only served to quicken into stronger life and endurance the spirit of the nation.

Steadily and staunchly the battered, starving and decimated remnant of the army was withdrawn to be reorganized. The devotion of all ranks, their burning indignation against the insolence of the enemy's calculations, and his premeditated atrocities aroused among the manhood and youth of the country a fine martial spirit. The Government had taken the precaution of ensuring that no males between the ages of sixteen and sixty should remain in the occupied territory to become the slaves and helots of the Hun. Under the untiring efforts of the French instructors they were rapidly attaining a high state of soldier-like efficiency.

With thq breaking up of the bleak misery of the cruel winter, with its incredible tale of disease, starvation and suffering, hope eternal, like the tender green shoots forcing their way through the barren looking waste of earth, was building up the hearts of Roumania's sons anew. Strong in the belief of their ultimate destiny they were keen to affirm their right to defend not only then- territory, but their country's name before the world and history.

They were realizing to the full that what was required in the stern test before them was an unshakable determination, an unflinching will to see the struggle through. They looked to their political leaders as well as then- generals for a calmness, a foresight and sagacity that would guide them safely, avoiding all false moves through the last phase of their desperate struggle. Their enemy, seeking to undermine their resistance in another way, had launched a determined and insidious campaign of propa-

236 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY ganda amongst the military and civil population. This was done through those Germans naturalized as Roumanian subjects, as well as German agents dressed as Russians and speaking the language fluently, who endeavoured to persuade the people that as the country was occupied and Russia ablaze with revolution from one end to another, a separate peace, backed up as their proposal was by deceptive promises of innumerable advantages, was their surest deliverance and hope.

But serious though the plight of the nation was, tragic the desolation and suffering, scant the succour or support they could expect from their flaming and anarchical neighbour Russia, yet our gallant little Ally, pressed back to the uttermost limits of her country, held her head up bravely, defying the menace and mendacious wiles of the enemy to make her break her bond.

Unsupported and alone the sixteen divisions which represented Roumania's whole army had fought with the superb courage of despair *thirty-seven supremely equipped divisions, the elite of the German Army*. Even a Power like Italy and her army, valiantly as they had fought, had nearly yielded to the onslaught of *thirty-three divisions composed of Austrians*.

Of the 620,000 soldiers who had leapt to arms in August, 1916, for the liberation of Transylvania, theirs by heritage and blood, only a third remained. Over 200,000 had been killed or wounded, while about 100,000 had been taken prisoners, cut off in the retreat and surrounded by the hosts of Falkenhayn and Mackensen.

Though the year ended in tragedy and disaster the virile intrepid spirit of the nation endured. She felt her sacrifice and suffering would not be in vain if by drawing

## AT BAY

237 down upon herself the *thirty-seven picked divisions* of the enemy's forces—which would otherwise have been employed on the Western front—she had helped the cause of the Allies and contributed towards the superb and historic triumph of the French at Verdun.

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But the army, exhausted by the incessant battles and hardships of the long four months' retreat, was almost worn out. Some few divisions, five in number, commanded by General Averescu, supported by the Russian divisions, continued to hold the front line on the Sereth, while the remainder were withdrawn to the rear. France and England took up the task of supplying the munitions and material necessary to equip the exhausted forces, which in the desperate struggle had been shorn of a considerable proportion of their effectives, while a large quantity of arms and munitions had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

The work necessitated almost superhuman efforts; armaments and munitions had to come by sea to Archangel, and then had to be transported across the whole length of Russia from north to south. The depth of winter, the disorganization and chaos consequent on the revolutionary condition of Russia, the peculation and insufficiency of railway transport made it a long uncertain proceeding.

Roumania possesses only one railway line running northwards, and that a single one connecting Moldavia with Russia. This was the only route by which it was possible to feed or succour the country. At Ungheni, the frontier railway station, the congestion was indescribable. The whole needs of a nation, and a nation destitute of

238 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY  
everything, had to pass over this solitary line. It was her only

avenue of supply, and it was tried to the uttermost, for the Russian reinforcements were now pouring in (great in bulk but lacking much in equipment), and the few roads deep in snow rendered transport by them almost impossible.

The arrival of the Russian reinforcements permitted General Averescu to divide the Roumanian Army into two groups; one was withdrawn to be reorganized, while the remainder, constituting the Second Army, continued to fight in the front line under his command. General Averescu is a man of few words, and a severe disciplinarian. He is tall and of very spare physique with shrewd deep-set eyes set in a seamed thought-worn brown face, over which lies an expression of melancholy. His temperament is a stern and vigorous one, but his sternness and strictness are mitigated by his strong sense of justice and the intimate knowledge and interest he shows in all ranks ; his readiness to acknowledge merit, to promote gallantry and resource, and his prompt and generally personal awards for bravery have inspired the army and nation with a whole-hearted confidence in his leadership.

A general overhaul of the various commands in the army commanded his instant attention. A great number of the generals who had taken part in the early part of the campaign were relieved of their posts; some were given minor commands in towns, other pensioned and some court-martialled. Young officers who had proved their capacity and worth in the stem ordeals of the retreat were made divisional commanders, and staff promotion by seniority was replaced by that of choice by

assured capacity. All this had an excellent effect on the spirit and confidence of the troops.

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The French Military Mission which had arrived at the most tragic moments of the country's fate—the dark days preceding the evacuation of the capital—had inspired the nation with new hope and courage, and they had been accorded a delirious welcome by the people. The Mission was headed by General Berthelot, an officer who had greatly distinguished himself at the battle of the Marne, and primed with the vast experience of two years' intensive warfare on the Western front, proved of the utmost value in collaborating with General Averescu in reorganizing the shattered Roumanian Army.

The work of drilling the new recruits proceeded energetically. After a few months' drilling these were gradually incorporated among the old units, and after three or four weeks' drilling with the men of the Old Army, were drafted to the front to replace other exhausted groups who retired behind the line for rest and reorganization. The arms and munitions supplied were different from those the Roumanian Army had hitherto employed, and the troops had to be instructed in their use. All this was accomplished in the face of almost insuperable difficulties of equipment, housing, food, etc., and the desperate battle against disease of the most virulent kind which had to be fought, and which, owing to the want of food, clothing and medical stores, and accentuated by the bitter winter weather, made the most ghastly ravages among both officers and men. Yet in spite of all this, within five months another army of seven divisions was able to take its place in the firing line.

A speech from King Ferdinand at this time declared in ringing accents that notwithstanding the tragedy of the past Roumania would go on to victory with her great Allies, proud to fight with them. She had entered the side of the Entente by reason of her Latin race and tradition, for the freedom of her kinsmen, and because if she neglected her mission her position would become that of a vassal to another Power. It was a struggle between his conscience and his heart, said the King, but " my conscience triumphed. The Germans say, ' Germany above all.' I said, ' My duty above all.' "

But it needed all the courage and natural resilience of the nation to face the terrible conditions confronting them of devastating disease, lack of food and the disorganization consequent on the retreat and which could not be remedied at once. The Revolution in Russia had flamed forth, its frenzy of military insubordination and industrial upheaval, its ceaseless and futile orgies of talk, ' blether ' as the practical Scot would call it—the eternal never-ending committees of every description consuming the precious hours of day and night and paralysing all effort and action.

The Russian troops in Roumania, though not so demoralized as their brothers on the Russian front, were sporting the Red Badge, and with the crafty insidious help of German agents in their ranks were endeavouring to spread the same canker of rot and dissatisfaction among the ranks of the Roumanian soldiers.

But the Latin temperament of the Roumanians was a tougher, less impracticable and visionary one than the Slav. The chaotic conditions in Russia did not appeal to them ; they had suffered too terribly to risk losing the



little left them, and honour and loyalty were very dear to them. The splendid and constitutional attitude of the King and Queen, the unselfish devotion they had shown their suffering people, soldiers and civilians alike, in these unprecedented days of misery, only served to deepen their loyalty to the dynasty—more than ever now Roumanian—and root it firmly in the heart of the nation.

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A very touching and important link in the history of the nation's racial sentiment and union was forged in July, 1917, when a large number of Austrian prisoners of Roumanian descent from the Banat and the Bukovina, captured by the Russians in the earlier months of the war, petitioned to be allowed their release and the honour of fighting with their Roumanian brothers against their former oppressors, and the privilege of striking a blow for the union of their race. More than eighty thousand of the total of prisoners had petitioned, and the first draft arriving from Russia provoked an extraordinary outburst of enthusiasm.

The Roumanians fully realized the signification of this act. For these prisoners had enjoyed the most considerate treatment in Russia, and it was a wonderful and spontaneous evidence of the desire of the race for union that had impelled them to incur afresh the dangers and trials of the battle-field under the Roumanian flag, the only one to them that counted.

The ceremony at which they took the oath of allegiance was held in the open in the presence of the King, members of the Royal Family, the Ministers, General Berthelot and the Members of the French Military Mission, and R

242 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY General  
Tcherbatcheff, Second in Command of the Russian Forces  
operating in Roumania.

Mass was celebrated under a sun that poured a gorgeous benediction on to the packed and waiting multitude. As soon as it was over a great wave of melody floated out from the ranks of the " brothers from over the Carpathians." Deep and stirring the notes swelled forth, first the Royal Hymn, then the patriotic song the " Deș- teaptă-te, Române, din somnul cel de moarte " (Awake, thou Roumanian, from the sleep of death), written during the Transylvanian Rising in 1848. The great burst of music rolled forth in the dancing sunlight, pouring from hearts surcharged and suffering, yet unconquerable in their hope of freedom and reunion, and ready to give their lives for it. It was a deeply touching moment, and many a heart quickened and eye glistened tearfully at a scene which symbolized the beginning of the realization of their ancient dream, and which crowned in some small measure all they had lost and suffered in endeavouring to obtain.

The new troops, accompanied by French officers, these splendid Allies who have upheld the banners of historic France like Paladins, marched past the King amid thunderous applause, carrying the flags of Transylvania, Bukovina and the Banat, on which was inscribed " Long live the King of all the Roumanians," " Long live the King of Greater Roumania." The remainder of the day was given up to a rapturous reception of the new troops, in the Place Unirea, under the statue of Prince Cuza, the first Prince of United Roumania, and also under that of their great hero of earlier days, Michael the Brave. Stirring orations to a great concourse of people were



I-UNERAT, OF \N OFFICER IN THE MOUNT\INS.



**DIGGING MOUNTAIN TRENCHES,**

delivered by the Prime Minister, Take Jonesco, Octavian Goga, the poet, the Gabrielle d'Annunzio of the Roumanian race, and Iorga the historian.

Over in Paris another ceremony was taking place testifying to the deep spirit of affectionate sympathy between the races. At the Sorbonne a great manifestation, attended by the President of the Republic, M. Paul Deschanel, the President of the Chamber, the Ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, and representatives of the letters and arts of France, was held when the banner of Roumania's great fighting Prince, Stephen the Great, was handed over to M. Lahovary, the Roumanian Minister in Paris.

Stephen, Roumania's national hero, stands for all that is valorous in their history, and the manner in which the banner fell into the hands of the French was almost that of a chance discovery.

During the fighting of the Expeditionary Army of Salonica the French occupied Mount Athos, and found in the Bulgarian convent of Zographo the banner of the great King, who in 1475 repulsed the Turks, and so saved Moldavia. Though all the monasteries on famous Mount Athos were left intact by the French, in marked contrast to the spirit of a so-called Kultur displayed by their Hunnish foes, General Sarraill considered that a Bulgarian institution was the last place for the banner of the splendid and valorous King to rest, and it was accordingly sent to France for presentation to the Roumanian authorities.

The banner, which is still in good preservation, is of velvet richly embroidered, and represents St. George, Roumania's patron Saint, seated, armed and crowned by two angels, one of whom hands him a sword and the

244 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY other a shield. Lying beneath his feet is a three-headed dragon, which has been cut down before his throne.

In thanking the President, M. Lahovary mentioned his country's eternal gratitude to France, who had understood and encouraged all her efforts, and spoke of his country's struggle to preserve her own nationality long before anything had been heard of the " principle of nationalities." Neither France nor Roumania were asking for annexation, all they asked was the redemption of brothers and sons from a pitiless foreign yoke.

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King Ferdinand took a great step forward when addressing his troops at the front, he promised drastic constitutional reforms, the necessity for which had been felt in the country for nearly twenty years. Various attempts at reform had been made by different Governments, but none of them had been successful in really improving the position of the peasantry. The reason for this was the inadequate representation of the great agricultural masses of the nation, the peasants being represented by only twelve members, whereas the landowners had over 130 representatives. Naturally there was little chance of the claims of the peasantry being effectively secured.

When war was declared and the King summoned the nation to arms, a magnificent rally was the response, not a single peasant failed, and when disasters followed quickly upon each other and the whole nation reeled under the crisis of the retreat, most of the peasants followed the army, boys even of thirteen and fourteen joining the colours with a wonderful ardour of devotion. Some of the big landowners, officers of the reserve, did

not, however, show the same fidelity to their country, and under pretext of disagreement with the foreign policy of the Government, remained behind with the enemy. Happily the number of these contemptibles was small.

The loyalty and devotion of the peasants to the kingdom could no longer go unrewarded, and both Chamber and Senate have accepted the principle of universal suffrage—a great advance from the archaic system of representation by the Electoral Colleges which had hitherto prevailed.

In addition to this the King also placed large estates belonging to the Crown for disposal amongst the peasantry who had splendidly faced every horror and hardship without flinching. Further large grants of land were voted by the Government to be divided among those who had taken part in the war.

Much, however, still remains to be done, for events all over the World have roused the democratic spirit, and in view of what the peasants have done for Roumania during the centuries, they are entitled to still wider reforms.

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By early summer the freshly reorganized Roumanian Army was ready for action. Their plan was to pierce the Austro-German line between the Danube and the Moldavian Carpathians, with the object of striking south of Focsani in the direction of Ploeshti and Bucharest ; deliver the capital, release the oil-fields from the hands of the enemy and with the help of the Allies' Army at Salonica threaten Bulgaria and Turkey.

Their offensive, starting in the Susitza and Putna valleys, met with the most brilliant results. In the course of a few days they advanced over twelve miles on a

246 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY twenty-mile front, storming positions of great strength, capturing five thousand prisoners and nearly a hundred guns. Unfortunately the Russian armies north were showing their disorganization by abandoning positions without putting up any defence. This affected the Russian armies in Roumania fighting in the Carpathians, who fell back also, rendering an invasion of Podolia and Bessarabia more than probable. The position became so threatening that it was found necessary for the Roumanians to abandon their offensive and to despatch a considerable number of their troops to support and rally the Russian forces—rather like a plucky minnow trying to support a whale—but history had shown once before what powerful help this little nation had been to the raw Colossus in the Russo-Turkish war, and turned then what had looked like a rout into a victory.

The enforced change in the plans of the Roumanian general staff was an opportunity of which the Archduke commanding the Northern Austro-German forces was not slow in availing himself, and he at once attacked along the weakened point between the Trotus and Oituz valleys towards Ocna, and also along the Focsani-Marasesti railway. It was a twofold thrust, primarily to cut the railway line to Galatz\* and render it and Reni in Russia valueless, and secondly to deprive Roumania of every source of contact with Russia.

The Roumanians put up a desperate resistance, repeatedly counter-attacking, and capturing another two thousand prisoners and several guns. During fourteen days' fierce fighting they had to fall back a few miles, but not before they had the satisfaction of knowing that the enemy had used up fourteen divisions, which were



known to have sustained severe losses. Immediately after this Mackensen launched his offensive on August 8th, beginning on a front of over 25 kilometres between the Sereth and the Gabrantzi mountain range. He attacked with twelve divisions, ten German and two Austrian, not including his German Alpine troops. The fourth Russian Army offered but slight resistance, and he made rapid progress until the First Roumanian Army opportunely appeared upon the scene. At the same time, and with a view to facilitating Mackensen's task, the First Austrian Army—one of the group of armies commanded by General Rohr, and under the supreme direction of the Archduke Joseph—received orders on August 9th to launch an offensive in the direction of Oneşti on the river Trotus ; the aim of the two offensives, the one under Mackensen and the other under General Rohr, being to enclose in a great ' pincer ' movement the Roumanian Army, and more especially the Second Army of Averescu.

Both commanders made almost superhuman efforts to advance, but the Roumanians, fighting superbly, withstood without faltering the most ferocious artillery bombardment and massed attacks carried out with the extreme of violence by Bavarians and Germans, with a resistance and bravery of unparalleled ardour.

For ten days and nights the enemy hammered at the wall formed by the Roumanian Army. Regardless of losses he repeatedly sent wave after wave of massed infantry which broke in front of the splendid Roumanian defence. The valley was a tomb for thousands of the enemy, and the superb fighting powers shown by the Roumanians, who had sworn to die rather than be

248 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY captured, drew a well-deserved and spontaneous tribute of admiration from the foreign officers who witnessed their valour and stem obstinacy of defence. The young officers, barely a month out of the schools, showed unsurpassable bravery, and like the splendid young Cadets during the Russian Revolution, fought like tigers.

One of the most splendid episodes of this gallant little nation's fight to the death for the few miles of soil left them, was the magnificent courage and devotion of the battalions of women volunteers. Think of it, we women of the Western world ! Many of us are doing splendid work over here in factory, canteen and hospital, but out there these brave women, sweethearts and sisters of the sturdy peasant soldier, battled for everything that meant sheer *existence*, with a heroism beyond all words. They fought beside their men in the front lines with a dash, such an unshakable fury of heroism that the Army Commanders declared that it had the effect of doubling the attacking value of the regiments !

The Germans were determined to force the passage of the river and had been ordered to cross, no matter at what cost. Under a terrific bombardment supported by dense waves of asphyxiating gases, three crack German divisions attacked a single Roumanian division which was defending the bridge at Cosmesti.

Their defence was heroic and, in the words of an onlooker, " these peasant soldiers who had to face much superior German forces, which had on their side the advantage of surprise, is not surpassed by anything in the deeds either of the Belgians or Serbians." They fought unflinchingly " though whole regiments were decimated by the fire of the German guns and machine

guns. Officers and soldiers died in their positions, refusing to withdraw or surrender. The French Captain Vernueil, attached to a Roumanian regiment, lost his life fighting with his Roumanian comrades.”<sup>1</sup>

The final German effort was launched in the presence of King Ferdinand and Prince Carol who shared the risks of battle with their soldiers who fought so dauntlessly that the enemy fled in disorder. Many prisoners, both Germans and Austrians, were paraded before the King next day when the goose step was entirely lacking, and a more dejected-looking lot of " Proud Prussians " have been rarely seen !

This great battle, which lasted for nearly three weeks, was one of the most bloody of this great war, and without doubt it was by far the most important of all the Roumanian campaign.

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Meanwhile in the conquered Roumanian territory the enemy wreaked the full limit of his vengeance on the unhappy people. Enough has leaked out to show us— though it would seem well-nigh impossible—that the Germans have outdone their Bulgar allies in ferocity and ruthless oppression ; for they have added to the treacherous savagery of the Bulgar temperament all the ferocity of a scientific brutality.

The horrors committed are a tale that as yet cannot be told. Dimly we know it as one of the most hideous events of the war. Far worse than the occupation of Belgium, for over there in the guarded silence of these conquered Eastern lands the dead, the tortured, the dying can tell no tales, send forth no anguished cry for

<sup>1</sup> *The Times* correspondent with the Roumanian Army.

One evening the sun was going down in glowing glory, turning all it shone over into glittering gold—I was late, other duties having kept me back, the train I had come to greet was already moving away.

In joyous crowds the young soldiers thronged the carriages ; others had been before me to deck their caps, their tunics, even their horses and cannons with bright violet asters of every shade. The prodigious radiance of sunset fell over all those flowers, enhancing their beauty, as though even the heavens were doing their utmost to render more blessed the departure of those eager boys who so gaily were going to death.

Hurriedly I ran towards the moving carriages, distressed at being late. A great shout mounted from a thousand throats as they recognized me, and a shower of flowers fell at my feet.

From their caps, their tunics, their cannons, they tore away the flowers that had been given them to shower them over their Queen, whilst the usual chorus mounted to the skies : “ May you become Empress ! Empress of all the Roumanians.”

And always more flowers fell over me, my arms were full, my hands could hardly hold them, the ground was purple where I stood.

Long did I remain there after the train had disappeared. A trail of smoke against the orange sky alone marked its passage, and all those fading flowers at my feet.

As one looks at the incomprehensible, I gazed at those two long rails running into the infinite, there seeming to join their separate ways, and wondered towards what Fate those youths were hurrying, wondered if their

#### FROM MY SOUL TO THEIRS 151

dream would be realized, especially I wondered how many would come back.

The sun had set, the smoke had dissolved into nothing, the voices of my soldiers were but a remembrance. Slowly I turned

my foot towards home.

All day long I have been moving amongst the wounded, wandering from ward to ward—they all want me to come amongst them, each soldier desires to see his Queen.

Never do I leave a call unanswered, everywhere do I go, no sight is too sad, no fatigue too great, no way too long, but sometimes it is to me as though I were wandering through some never-ending dream.

Bed beside bed they lie there, and all eyes meet me, follow me, consume me ; never before have I known what it means to be the prey of so many eyes—they seem to be drawing my heart from my bosom, to be a weight I can hardly bear !

I bend over suffering faces, clasp outstretched hands, lay my fingers upon heated brows, gaze into dying eyes, listen to whispered words—and everywhere the same wish follows me : “ May you become Empress, Empress of all the Roumanians.” Stiffening lips murmur it to me, hopeful voices cry it out to me, it goes with me wherever I move : “ What matter our suffering as long as you become Empress; Empress of all the Roumanians ! ” Infinitely touching are the words when they mount towards me from the beds of so many wounded, who see in me the realization, the incarnation of the dream for which they are giving their lives.

It makes me feel so small, so humble before their stoic endurance ; tears come to my eyes, and yet because of the beauty of it, I have a great wish to thank God.

252 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY still,” and justice, though its face is hidden, is still enthroned, and

“ When this night is ended and when new days begin Bitterly shall your children pay for their father’s sin.

The eyes of all shall mock you, lips as you pass be dumb : Into the paths you follow no other guest shall come ;

You shall sit at the feast unfriended, you shall go from the house unstayed, You shall be on the earth a stranger till the debt that you owe is paid.” <sup>1</sup>

The Teuton and the Bulgar are the only two among the world nations who have deified Hate, enthroning it as a national worship, a hymn voiced by millions in prayer.

The German Hymn is well known, its High Priest was honoured and profusely decorated by the All Highest. Here is its twin soul, composed by the Bulgarian, Ivan Arnaudoff, who calls himself the Pindar of Bulgaria !

“ *Let not one stone rest upon another, let not one child suck from its mother’s breast, not one old man lean upon his grandson’s shoulder.*

“*Throw their skulls to the dogs, let there remain on the ruins your hand has sown only skeletons and ghosts.*

“ *See a decrepit old man dragging his miserable years in an effort to cheat death and your zeal.*

“*Fell him under your boot, tear out his troubled eyes with a fork.*”

As to the unmentionable atrocities destined for the women and young men they cannot be printed.

Is it possible that a people who voice such a diabolical creed should be allowed to exist in Europe ; should be permitted a place in the civilized portion of the globe ? They should be transported to the distant steppes from

<sup>1</sup> Harold Begbie.

which they migrated—Europe is no place for them and their kind.

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In the Roumanian territory occupied by these tyrants incredible hardships were inflicted on their victims, and a well-known Roumanian writer told me that by February, 1917, over 60 per cent of the military prisoners had succumbed to starvation, cruelty and neglected disease, while the lot of the civilian was equally bad. Both alike had to work within reach of the Allies' artillery ten hours a day, and were flogged when they fell down from lack of food and exhaustion. Teams of ten to fourteen men were harnessed to the heavy transport carts and ploughs, instead of oxen, and every one from twelve to sixty-five years old had to work on the roads, Sundays included, without pay or food.

A huge levy of ten million pounds was demanded from the occupied districts ; Bucharest paid three million four hundred and forty thousand pounds, while the country districts, from which the richer people had fled and only the struggling peasants remained, had to pay between them the crushing burden of eight million pounds. All cattle, grain, clothing, bedding, iron and copper utensils were confiscated and the peasants had to buy back at extortionate prices their own maize, given them in daily rations of eight ounces for an adult and three ounces for children—a starvation pittance for the support of a cruelly over-worked existence.

The sown fields were all destroyed by these scientific *Jahoos* to a distance of thirty-five miles around the once prosperous town of Braila, and information only is lacking as to what further destruction and wicked desolation

254 ROUMANIA : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY has been perpetrated in the more distant territory from which no word can come. Hostages such as the Attorney General of the Supreme Court of Bucharest and others of high social standing were made to work at most degrading tasks and publicly insulted and jeered at.

The women and girls were violated and removed from any protection their family could afford them. In order to provide the conqueror with comfortable quarters the people were herded together, as many as thirty occupying one small close room such as are to be found in the cottages. The people looked like ghosts, and when one of the villages was recaptured and General Vaitoiano commanding the 2nd Roumanian Army Corps entered it, the poor wretches, faint and weeping, prostrated themselves in gratitude before him, hardly believing the torments of the long eight months' nightmare were over.

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And the cry goes up all over Europe, and far beyond : “ Why must such things be ? Why must the world be drenched in blood and tears to feed the pride of a would- be world conqueror, the insensate ambition, the lust of power, of greed for dominion of a megalomaniac and a military caste who have lit a fire that has devoured the world with flame and torture ?

And what words can depict the scenes of savagery and destruction ; the suffering and atrocities they have let loose on a world of peace and beauty !

Montenegro swept out, Serbia annihilated, Roumania devastated ! The crowds of broken, famished peasantry herded together, breeding disease and madness and worked like slaves ! Those also of Belgium ! Torn from their homes and sent to labour in exile, starved, decimated by



consumption, they are cast out to die when the uttermost ounce of sweated labour has been squeezed out of their poor emaciated bodies !

Hell at the Front—Misery in the rear !

The millions of starving prisoners, ill-treated, abused, bludgeoned or kicked to death. The foul poison gases, germ traps, plots, lies ; everything that is remorseless, diabolical !

The thunder of the moaning sea seems to roll out a requiem across the lone wastes, for the souls of the women and children sent to their death below by the German chivalry of the deep ! The mournful sighing of the evening breeze, whimpering eerily, brings the faint sound of ghostly cries, from murdered and bombed Uttle ones. The slow merciless drip-drip of rain—the bitter tears of wives and mothers. The shuddering dirge of autumnal gales echoing drearily, chants the terrible tale of the frenzied struggles, the piteous sobs of the girls—the womanhood of outraged and desolated lands.

And over it all is heard the faint but never-ceasing rustle of Passing Souls—the ghostly tread of warriors—that mighty host of valiant, wonderful Youth, passing . . . ever passing . . . offering the one supreme sacrifice ! Those brave spirits who " poured out the red sweet wine of youth, gave up the years to be, of work, of joy and that un hoped serene that men call age," who send forth their mute message from the VTecked and desolated lands they died to save.

“ O you, that have rain and sun, Kisses of  
children and of wife, And the good earth to  
tread upon, And the mere sweetness that is  
life, Forget not us who gave all these For  
something dearer and for you ! ”

Dimly in our little dusty civilian souls we comprehend the superb chivalry, the glory and fearlessness of those who are stemming the flood of brigandage and barbarism. Surely we

can follow, if we only will, the gleaming torch of faith and courage their souls bear forth so proudly as they pass into the trembling Beyond !

And the Great Being, shrouded, enigmatical, broods before the Mirror. The wild tide of struggling life blurs it in swirling mists ; brief shafts of light, of glorious doings, clear it for a moment. We think we see an answer to the Eternal question.

But the mists close down again ; the shapes of life, the forms of good and evil move to and fro, striving, struggling. New souls come forth, born amid the welter and stress. Creation never falters, never tires.

Far above, and beyond the grim reality of earth, with its "haggard ugliness, its divine beauty, its depths of Death and Life," a peace, a stillness reigns.

The veiled Being, mute, inscrutable, waits and watches. Man's struggles his passions, his hopes, are but as a moment in the vast Eternity of Time.

## CHAPTER XIV

### AND AFTER?

Who counsels peace at this momentous hour. When God has given  
deliverance to the oppress'd And to the injured power ?  
Who counsels peace, when Vengeance like a flood  
Rolls on, no longer now to be repress'd ;  
When innocent blood  
From the four corners of the world cries out For justice upon the  
accursed head ;  
When freedom hath her holy banners spread Over all nations, now  
in one just cause United; when with one sublime accord Europe  
throws off the yoke abhorred, And loyalty and faith and ancient  
laws Follow the avenging sword ?  
Woe, woe to England 1 woe and endless shame,  
If this heroic land  
False to her feelings and unspotted fame, Hold out the Olive to the  
Tyrant's hand.

*Robert Southey. April, 1814.*

f—n~^HESE heroic words were written a little over a

- century ago when, as to-day, great issues were
- hanging in the balance and the voice of the battling  
peoples were called upon to declare

for the destiny of their children and their children's children.  
Like a bugle call they ring out again over the world, over a great  
continent writhing under a far worse torture and tyranny than  
ever Napoleon brought to their forefathers.

Russia which had stood in the eyes of the world as a  
Hercules, an embodiment of vast potential power inert perhaps,  
but by her righteous will and the help of her s<sup>257</sup>

Allies slowly gathering a great momentum of adequately equipped force—help given her in large measure by the sweat and financial support of millions of Allied workers—beyond the seas—was now stricken with paralysis.

The great Revolution of March which had started with such high hopes, such proud dreams of a free, stable and Liberal democracy had fallen a victim to the sinister bribery and promises of a pro-German intrigue. Torn by civil war and anarchy, Russia as an organized State was ceasing to exist. Rapidly disintegrating she was slipping back to her position in the Middle Ages.

Lenin was in power and was being pressed by the German negotiators to barter the nation's splendid patrimony, to detach great provinces of the Russian State, to sacrifice the millions of lives laid down in defence of them and the most honourable principles of international faith, to an ignoble surrender. What bitterness of spirit must the real heart of patriotic Russia feel—a great voiceless multitude—as impotent and helpless under an anarchical and autocratic Government she sees her honour being dragged in the dust at the bidding of the Hun!

“Russia,” as one of her dreamers said, “led the way.”

“Chaos, anarchy, plunder, terrorism for the hour are masters in that huge amorphous, unstable, race. Let us not suppose because it is so extravagant that it means nothing, and will soon be nothing but a hideous memory—wild, impossible, anti-Social as Bolshevism is, remember that it is the delirious orgy of a passion which is very real, very wide, very deep—which has many forms and in some form has an inevitable future.”<sup>1</sup>

The news of the fall of Kerensky had fallen upon

<sup>1</sup> Frederic Harrison, *Fortnightly Review*, Jan., 1918.



THE JUI< 1 N IN ONE OP THE HOSPITALS AT JASSY RUN BY IRENCH DOCIORS.



ARMY "POPA," OR PRIEST, BLESSING THE FALLEN.

Roumania like a thunderbolt. With the fearful presage of impending doom, with the biting memory of the recent terrible defection which had contributed so greatly to the tragic loss of three-quarters of her kingdom, she realized only too bitterly what her abandonment by Russia would mean, and how completely she lay at the mercy of that country's good will and faith.

Notwithstanding the w'elter of anarchy, Kerensky had certainly represented a sense of honour and a certain stable authority ; and though too weak, too visionary a nature to dam the overwhelming flood he had released—• now overspreading the country and submerging great landmarks, or to rebuild the tottering edifice of the State disappearing amongst the waters—he at any rate was a patriotic and honourable man, faithful to the integrity and obligations of his country.

At first General Tcherbatscheff, the Commander-in - Chief of the Russian Forces on the Roumanian and Southern Russian Front, had been able to some partial extent to keep the extreme virus of rot and desertion from affecting the troops under his command. But by November this semblance of order and allegiance had disappeared, and Roumania had to face the fact of the complete collapse of the Russian armies.

Like a gigantic wave thousands of disorderly Russian soldiers were deserting the front and streaming homewards to swell the starving mass of anarchical and disorganized peasantry.

“ Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful wild,

Up from the bottom, turned by furious winds and surging waves.”

They swept over the country towards the east, and the utter disorganization of these enormous crowds of renegade troops was unspeakable. Day after day they poured

back in a steady unceasing stream, sixty thousand passing through a station in one day alone ! They swarmed on the trains till they were literally hidden under them ; outside and in they hung like flies : the roof, steps, platforms and on the engine itself, and even in the spaces between the wagons were utilized by putting boards across the buffers. So desperate were they in their crazy flight, so utterly disorganized, that they travelled absolutely empty handed, having discarded and cast aside rifles, kit, everything ! Guns, munitions and vast stores of equipment of every description, and worth many millions of pounds, were simply left for the Germans to take. . . . What an inglorious flight ! What a pusillanimous surrender !

They showed the utmost bitterness and hostility to their Allies the Roumanian soldiers, who stuck loyally to their trenches refusing to join in the mad Bolshevik dance of anarchy and terrorism, and General Tcherbat- cheff was threatened that if he did not resign he would incur the same butchery and death as had been meted out to General Dukhonin.

This wholesale desertion was uncovering the flanks of the Roumanian armies—the tiny little heart of desolate land on which some millions of half-starved and fugitive people were existing—there is no other word for their terrible plight—was being exposed, and despair was knocking at its very portal. Do we realize here in England the hideous situation she found herself forced to face, the terrible decision these Russian makers of a separate peace were compelling her to take ! Forced by the ruthless clutch of tragic circumstances to sign the armistice imposed on her !

But the will of Russia does not imply that it is the will



of Roumania, and there is no Bolshevik poison as yet in the sturdy heroic Roumanian race.

Yet what a bitter turn of the Wheel of Fate ! What a cruel sacrifice of all she held most dear, most precious ! The resolute courage with which she had faced the calamity of the retreat, the loss of her country ; the Herculean efforts by which she had reorganized her decimated army, and with the spirit of her people surging up again, she had hoped to redeem the tragedy of the past ! The valour, the splendid fighting qualities displayed in the brilliant offensive of the summer which had given her every reason to hope that they would be able to sweep forward and retake their capital !

All ! all ! all ! came crashing down like a house of cards ! Surrounded by four enemy powers—with flaming Russia behind—a Red Guard of terror and autocracy that would refuse her the sanctuary of retreat were she forced to retire, imagination could hardly conceive a ghastlier fate for the little kingdom.

It was as if the whole of England had been forced to retreat to Inverness, and there in the bleak sparsely cultivated north had to exist with little assurance of help and with further retreat denied them.

How could the Allies help her—how was it possible to send her the troops needed to help her hold her fronts—replace the Russians deserting her ! How get the food, munitions, the vitally necessary supplies through the great disrupted Russian State—from farthest north to the distant south—when robbery, crime and anarchy were ruling supreme ! Few here realized the magnitude of the little nation's isolation, the difficulty of Allied help reaching her at this terrible moment. Little news came through. The great heaving welter in Russia was a wall which shrouded the little nation completely. Pluck, bravery, courage ! She had them in plenty, but how were they to feed her starving

people—maintain her armies ? Truly, God seemed to have turned His Face from them and their ancient prayer : “ May God never inflict on the Roumanian the full measure of suffering he can endure ” was being tested through and through to the deepest fibres of their natures. . . .

\* \* \* \*

Forced by the overwhelming crumbling of Russia, deserted by her quondam ally, isolated, stricken and beyond the reach of succour : surrounded by the savage menace of the plundering, blackmailing Powers, she has had to yield, under *force majeure*—and for the moment—to a tyrannical and infamously misnamed peace.

And Austria, that swollen octopus gorged to the uttermost with the blood of those other suffering alien races she has sucked the soul and life from, greedily, covetously reaches out a writhing tentacle towards the life-stream of this land and with the Bulgar brood tears out the pulsing throat and heart—her port, her mountain ranges, her vast oil fields—from the quivering victim.

“ The only alternative put before the unhappy country was immediate peace or complete obliteration from the map of Europe. If she did not conclude peace she would be divided up between Bulgaria on one side and Hungary on the other and extinguished from among the class of independent nations.”<sup>1</sup>

Could a more relentless and savage fate be meted out under the hypocrisy of a so-called peace by ostensibly Christian Powers ?

\* \*

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\*

But the Book of Ancient and Divine Wisdom has said :

Fear not them that kill the body but are not able to kill the soul,” and those words ring out with never-dying conviction at

<sup>1</sup> The Rt, Hon. A. J. Balfour,

a moment of national agony as this.

Fear not—little nation ! Keep your hearts firm, your heads high. The civilized races have sworn that full impartial justice, justice done at every point and to every nation shall be meted out.

However long the war may last the great free nations have said that they will stand by their faithful Allies in a spirit of immutable resolve until their territories are evacuated, and the redemption of their enslaved children is secured ; that they are fighting for " the principle of justice to all people and nations alike, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another whether they be strong or weak . . . and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives their honour and everything they possess."

Nothing else matters but this—to hold on to this aim and to grimly fight to the finish. A security for Europe impregnable and lasting is what we must have or die. Never, never again must this hydra-headed monster of unimaginable massacre and destruction, this hateful thing of Kaiserism and Militarism be allowed to raise its head and bathe the world in fire and blood again. The very dead send forth their message to endure to the end !

“ They claim our weapons, not our tears, Dying they raised a single plea That grimly strong we would avenge And crown their grave with victory.”

And Roumania who has battled so superbly against overwhelming odds, under difficulties of discouragement, isolation, treachery, starvation and disease which we here in our strength and security can barely imagine, must never, never be forgotten. For her as well as for Serbia and Montenegro our word must be made good to the uttermost, and our debt is all the more binding because their fate—submerged and tortured under

the doom of an age—has been so terrible. Take Ionesco has said : “In Roumania we are faithful to the Allies and our word. Our sufferings come last.”

And indeed as one looks back through the centuries at the heroic struggle made by the race, it is their sufferings borne so uncomplainingly, their extraordinary tenacity and vigour to endure that is the truest and most wonderful surety for their destiny and future. Sometimes vanquished, sometimes victorious, crushed or hopeful—all has joined in forming their indomitable soul. With breasts bared to the fury of warfare, struggling to defend their soil, sweating to pay the tribute extorted from them ; dying only to rise again, persevering and tenacious both for work and resistance to alien influence, their generous, tender, tolerant soul—which one might well suppose might have become bitter, cruel, brutal under such long tyranny—only clasped their national unity, their faith, their hope in their destiny more closely. Valiant, hopeful, steadfast, what might have they not become had peace been their portion !

With heads erect they have withstood all oppression, overcome all tragedies. Bending to the storm, bruised, crushed or bent—they have never yet been broken. Their kingly device : “ By ourselves ” founded after the War of Independence in 1877, is an omen of endurance,, hope and ultimate redemption for our distant, stricken, but heroic little ally—Roumania.

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